

CHAPTER III

JAINISM IN THE PĀNDYA KINGDOM

3.0 INTRODUCTION

Jainism and its existence in the Pāṇḍya Kingdom is evidently deep-rooted since the ancient times. Jainism was at its culmination in the Pāṇḍya territory during the 8th and 9th centuries A.D. and it had a fair following and enjoyed royal patronage. Jainism continued to exist amidst mounting challenges till the close of the 13th century.

3.1 PĀNDYAS

The Pāṇḍyas were one of the oldest ruling dynasties in the Tamil country, with their capital at Madurai on the banks of River Vaigai¹. The long rule of Pāṇḍyas, from Sangam Age to the 16th century, except for a brief period of 'kalabhra interregnum (A.D 300-600)' witnessed the rise and fall of Jainism. The Pāṇḍyas were in possession of the Tirunelveli District from the earliest historical times². The Girnar Rock edict of Aśoka mentions that the Pandyas were the neighbours who were in the South of the Aśoka's borders.³

¹ Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report, Calcutta, 1902-03. Also Sewell's Lists, II, pp.221

² Sewell's List I, 303.

³ Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, Vol.I, p.xxxi

The geographical limits of the ancient Pāṇḍya kingdom may roughly be stated to have comprised the modern districts of Madurai⁴, Ramnad, Pudukkōttai, Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari. The Vellār flowing through the Pudukkōttai formed its northern boundary; Indian Ocean is the Southern limit; Bay of Bengal is the eastern boundary and the Western ghats formed the barrier in the west. A traditional poem gives the demarcations of the Pāṇḍya kingdom⁵.

3.1.1 PĀṆDYA RULERS

The origin of the Pāṇḍyas is obscure. The earliest historical kings of the Pāṇḍya country are those mentioned in the early Tamil works known as Sangam classics.⁶ The Maduraikkanji refers to two kings as the predecessors of the Nedunjeliyan of Talaiyalanganam Viz., a Nediyan (1-61) identified with Vadimbalamba Ninraavan by the famous annotator Naccinarkkiniyar and a palsalai Mudukudumi (1-759).

Many kings who ruled the Pāṇḍya kingdom after Nedunjeliyan found portrayed in paripadal⁷, Purananuru⁸ and Narrinai⁹.

4. Madura had four gates with high towers in the fort and hence familiarly known as Nan-Madak-Kudal or the "Cluster of four towers". The name was some times shortened into Madak-kudal, or kudal.

- Nakkirar's Tiru-murukarup-padai, line 71; kalith-thokai, stanza 35, line 17; stanza 92, lines 11 and 65.

⁵ See Appendix 1

⁶ The list of Pāṇḍya kings can be known from "Historical Inscriptions of Southern India", Robert Sewell, pp.377-381.

⁷ No.15, No.12

3.1.2 KALABHRA EPOCH AND PĀNDYNAD

The Kalabhras who seized power in Madurai by the middle of the third century were supposed to be Jains from Karnataka¹⁰.

The period of the Kalabhra rule is said to have extended for nearly 300 years and to have occupied the entire terrain ruled by the Ceras, Colas and Pāṇdyas¹¹. Thus Kalabhras made inroad into the Pāṇḍya Kingdom.

3.1.3 PĀNDYA RESTORATION

The political confusion that reigned in the Tamil Country after the incursion of the Kalabhras was ended in the last quarter of the sixth century by the pallava ruler, Simhavishnu (A.D.575-600) and the Pāṇḍya ruler Kadungon (A.D.c. 500-620). In fact Kadungōn was instrumental for the eclipse of the Kalabhra rule and responsible for the restoration of the Pāṇḍya dynasty to power. He was followed by his son Maravarman Avanisulamani (C.620 A.D.)¹².

Arikesari Maravarman (670-710 A.D.) is identified with Kūn Pāṇḍya (hunch-back), the contemporary of Tirugnanasambandar. Kūn Pāṇḍya was a Jain by faith and he was converted to Śaivism subsequently.

⁸ 182, 239

⁹ 55 and 56.

¹⁰ See Appendix 2

¹¹ Bulletin of the Institute of Traditional cultures, Madras, 1976, pp. 81-85

¹² Velvikkudi grant II, 43-44

Then followed Koccadaiyan Ranadhira (C.710 A.D.), Rajasimha I Maravarman (C.740 A.D.), Jatila Parantaka I Nedunjadayan (C.765 A.D.) alias Varaguna Maharaja. The accession of Sri Mara Sri Vallabha (C.815 A.D.) was a blessing to Jainism by his grants. He was followed by Varagunavarman in 862 A.D.

From about A.D. 925 to the beginning of the thirteenth century, the Pāṇḍya Kingdom ceased to exist as an independent state and became part of the chola empire. During the reign of Vikrama Pāṇḍya (C.1180-1190 A.D.), the Pāṇḍya Kingdom recovered rapidly much of the power and glory that was lost. During the Muslim invasion of South India, Virapāṇḍya and Sundara Pāṇḍya had fallen out and were fighting against each other. Malik Kafur invaded the Pāṇḍya Kingdom in 1310 A.D.

Epigraphic evidences show that in the second half of the fourteenth century A.D. the Pāṇḍyas more or less completely lost their hold on the Madura country and found themselves restricted to their Southern possessions in the Tirunelveli District¹³.

3.2 THE COMING OF JAINISM

Jainism has come to light in the Pāṇḍya Kingdom of Madurai as early as the second century B.C. (the date given to the earliest Brahmi inscription from Mangulam)¹⁴. The route of this movement can be traced from the

¹³ K.A.N.Sastri, *The Pāṇḍyan Kingdom* p.217

¹⁴ ARE 460/1906
Brahmi Inscription mentioning Nedunchelian, Mangulam, Madurai District.
Also I. Mahadevan, *Corpus of Tamil Inscriptions* (1968).

Karnataka region, through the hills of the Kongu country (modern Coimbatore region), the region west of Tiruchirappalli, further South to Pudukkottai and then to the hills of Madurai. Some of the Jainas appear to have trickled into the Northern parts of the Tamil Country, as shown by the hills of Tondaimandalam, where again similar caverns with beds occur¹⁵. In the Cola Country, South of Tondaimandalam and North of Pāṇḍya territory, there is very little evidence of Jaina occupation in this period, with the exception of Tiruchirappalli and the Western fringes of the Kaveri delta.

However M.Arunachalam opines that the Pāṇḍya rulers of the Śāṅgam period did not belong to the Jaina faith....¹⁶. Also he is of the view that there is no mention of Jainism in all the 2381 verses of the Sangam poetry. He is also of the view that Jainism was unknown in Madurai, the capital of Pāṇḍyanad. He concludes that Jainism was introduced into the Pāṇḍyanad by the Kalabhras. K.A.N. Sastri, the author of "The Pāṇḍya Kingdom" wrote that Jainism flourished in the early centuries of the Christian era in the Śāṅgam age¹⁷.

It is not known definitely whether among the Śāṅgam poets there were several Jains or not. But a few literary works in the Śāṅgam age were not free from the influence of Jainism. For instance, Ulōchchanar, a prolific poet, whose

¹⁵ Ganesan, *Jaina Vestiges in the South Arcot District*, unpublished Ph.D Dissertation of the University of Madras, 1988.

¹⁶ M.Arunachalam, *Sankara - Parvati Endowment Lectures*, 1976-77, *Journal of the University of Madras*, Jan 1979, pp.9-54

¹⁷ K.A.N.Sastri, *The Pāṇḍyan Kingdom*, 1972, pp. 83-84

poems appear in the purananuru, Agananuru, Narrinai and Kuruntogai anthologies, was apparently a Jain, since his name seems to have been derived from 'Uloch' a Jaina religious ritual.

The fostering care of the Jainas inspired the South with new ideals and its literature enriched with new forms of expression. In the words of the veteran Dravidian scholar Dr.G.U.Pope, the "Jain compositions were clever, painted, elegant, full of satire, of worldly wisdom, epigrammatic, but not religious"¹⁸.

During the period of Neduncheliyan (of Talaiyālanganan), the ascetics of Jaina religion resided in gardens and not in monasteries¹⁹. The ascetics were worshipped by Śravakas (disciples) who took with them flowers with honey in them so as to attract bees and also incense.

Dr.K.V.Raman, the noted Archaeologist from the University of Madras is of the opinion that Jainism had a limited following in Pāṇḍyanadu during the Sangam age²⁰.

¹⁸ R.W.Frazer, A Literary History of India, Delhi, p.310

¹⁹ Talaiyālanganam is identified with

²⁰ Some aspects of Pāṇḍyan History in the light of recent discoveries - Lecture delivered by Dr.K.V.Raman under the auspices of Sir Subramania Ayyar Endowment Lecture, Madras University, 1972.

All these facts taken together reveal traces of Jainism discernible even in the earliest Tamil Literature extant²¹.

3.2.1 JAINA SECTS

Śvetāmbaras and Digambaras represent the two principal sects of the Jaina community found in Tamil Nadu.

The Digambaras went about 'clothed in space' (the term dik stands here for space and aimbara, for clothes). They were called the naked philosophers. The Digambara cult continued till 1000 A.D., when the Muslim rulers prohibited 'nudity'.

The 'Śvetāmbaras' were the white-clad (the term Sveta means white, aimbra means clothes) and the white garment signified their ideal of purity.

The Digambara sect was the one largely prevalent in the Tamil Country²². The Digambaras were called in Tamil Literature as Amanar which means naked men²³. Amanar and Ammanam indicate nudity. The digambaras gave up all their worldly desires including their clothes. Hence Amanar meaning 'Nirvanar' is attributed to Samanar (or Jains).

²¹ Pattinappalai, Line 53, refers to Jaina monasteries at Madurai which support the prevalence of Jainism in Pāṇḍya Kingdom.

²² M.S.Venkataswami, Samanamum Tamilum, 1959, p.8

²³ Tamil Lexicon, Vol.I, p.101, 1350. "Udaiyolindu".

3.2.2 SALLEKHANĀ

The early caves with Brāhmī inscriptions found in and around the Pāṇḍya Kingdom viz., Madurai and parts of Tirunelveli and Ramanathapuram districts were probably of the Jain ascetics, who performed the Sallekhanā - fasting for 56 days and finally gave up life²⁴. The names of such ascetics are:

- i) Kaniyananta asiriyar: occupied the monastery at Mānguḷam. Neḍunchelian's officer and brother-in-law made gifts to this monastery.
- ii) Kavuti-Iten: Sittannavāsāl
- iii) Ariti of Elaiyan lived at Karungālakkudi
- iv) Natan, lived in the dormitory at Kunrattur
- v) Kasapan, occupied the cave at Alagarkoil
- vi) Cen kayapan, an ammanan from Yarrur, lived in the cave at pugalur.
- vii) Cen kayapan - occupied the cave at Tiruchi
- viii) Cantiranti - did penance at Tirupparankunram
- ix) Matavirai, the great nun living at Alagarkoil cave
- x) A nun of Sapamita..... at Alagarkoil cave.

All the above names suggest that they belonged to the Jaina faith which laid emphasis on renunciation, fasting etc.

²⁴ An elaborate dicussion of Sallēkhanā is available in Appendix 26.

3.3 GROWTH AND SPREAD

When Jainism was introduced into the Pāṇḍya Kingdom, it was merely considered as a system of thought and was received with open arms. For the first time, the Jainas preached the principle of equality of man and taught that asceticism could be practised by all irrespective of caste, creed or community.

Jainism spread fast in the Pāṇḍya Kingdom. Its growth was phenomenal and it was due to various factors such as royal patronage, prevalence of religious tolerance among the Tamils, congenial geographical features in the Pāṇḍya Kingdom and various efforts to compete with Brahmanical Hindu religion such as forms of worship, ceremonies and rituals, Jaina missionary, etc.

3.3.1 ROYAL PATRONAGE

Jainism slowly gained currency among the masses with the patronage of the ruling kings. Arikesari Maravarman (or) Kūṇ Pāṇḍya (C.670 to 710 A.D.) was a Jain by faith. But, during his reign, Jainism had to face two extremes of advantage and disadvantage at the hands of the king. He was converted to Śaivism. Afterwards he became an anti-Jain. Nevertheless, the successors of Arikesari Maravarman or Kūṇ Pāṇḍya were not antipathic towards Jainism. In fact, no Pāṇḍya ruler had made Jainism as the State religion. The following kings patronised Jainism:-

Nedunjeliyan (2nd century-1st century B.C.)²⁵, Māran Sadaiyan (765-815 A.D.), Śrīvallabha (815 - 862 A.D.)²⁶, Varaguṇa II (862 - 880 A.D.)²⁷, Rajasimha II (900 - 920 A.D.)²⁸, Maravarman Sundara Pāṇḍya I (1216 A.D.)²⁹, Parantaka Pāṇḍya (1120 A.D.)³⁰, Sundara Pāṇḍya II (1216-1238 A.D.)³¹, Vira Pāṇḍya (1280 A.D.)³², Vikrama Pāṇḍya (1283-1296 A.D.)³³, Kulasekharadeva Pāṇḍya (1271 A.D.)³⁴ and Maravarman Virapāṇḍyadeva (1344 A.D.)³⁵.

3.3.2 RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

Generally it is accepted that tolerance was the key note of religious life in the Tamil Society. Though there had been stray incidents of religious intolerance as evidenced by inscriptions and literary works, tolerance towards other faith was found common among majority of the Pāṇḍya rulers. In a

²⁵ ARE 460/1906; ARE 465/1906.

²⁶ ARE 334/1929 - 30; SII, Vol. xiv, No.44;
ARE 722/1905; ARE 368/1904; SII, Vol. xiv, p.35.

²⁷ ARE 116/1894; SII, Vol.v, No.405.

²⁸ S.II Vol.14, No. 69.

²⁹ ARE 367/1904; SII Vol xvii, No.397.

³⁰ Travancore Archaeological Series, pp.1-7

³¹ ARE 243/1932-33
ARE 358/1908; ARE 269-70/1940-41

³² S.Shanmugam, Vijayamangalam, Mukkudai February, 1975 p.14.

³³ ARE 415/1928 - 29.

³⁴ ARE 142/1941-42.

³⁵ ARE 84/1887; SII, Vol.I, No. 69.

monarchical system, there was more scope and truth in the proverbial saying, "as the king so the people". This type of religious tolerance prevalent in the Pāṇḍya Kingdom was favourable for the spread of Jainism.

The Pāṇḍya kings found religious toleration not only a sound policy, but also a political necessity³⁶. This prevalence of religious tolerance in the kingdom expressed itself in the construction and maintenance of Jain temples.

3.3.3. CONGENIAL GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES

The hills and rocky terrains in the Pāṇḍya kingdom namely Aiyampalayam (Aivarmalai), Mettupatti (Siddharmalai) of Anna District; Kaḷugumalai in Kōvilpatti; Alagarmalai, Ānaimalai, Kanchamalai, Panchappandavarkuttu hill, Ummanamalai, Samanar Malai, Karuppannaśvāmi rock of Madurai; Bommaimalai, Kudagumalai hillock, Narttamalai, Sadaiyaparai, Śittannavāśal, Aluruttimalai of Pudukkottai, Irattaiyappottai rock of Tirunelveli provided a congenial atmosphere, to a larger extent, for the growth of Jainism.

The Jaina teachers such as Ajjanandi³⁷ of the early age with their picturesque imagination selected the natural caverns in the mountains and the tops and the slopes of the high and low hills as suitable places for their austerities and religious activities³⁸.

³⁶ The Jaina sages assumed the role of king - makers in the case of the Gangas and the Hoysalas.

- B.A. Saletore, *Medieval Jainism*, 1938, p.7.

³⁷ ARE 396/1954 - 55; ARE 692/1905; SII, Vol.XIV, No.108; ARE 729/1905; SII, Vol.XIV, No.126

³⁸ P.B.Desai. *Jainism in South India*, 1957, Pg.71

The atmosphere in the hills was conducive to the Jain priests for seclusion, prayer and meditation and thus they served as citadels of the Jain faith³⁹.

Hence the Jain centres originated and developed in the Pāṇḍya Kingdom on or by the side of the hills and mountains referred above.

3.3.4 JAINA MODE OF PRAYER AND WORSHIP

The Jains were most courteous in permitting outsiders to witness the ritual of their temples, the only condition being the visitors have to remove their shoes at the entrance.

The officiant in a Digambara temple must himself be a Jaina. In the morning he washes the idol (Jala pūja) and dries it, and marks it with three auspicious marks of yellow powder (candana pūja), and offers rice (Aksata pūja) and dried (not fresh) fruit (Naivedya Pūja). In the evening the worship consists of Arati pūja, when a five - fold lamp is solemnly waved from left to right for a few minutes in front of the idol.

The strange part of Śvetāmbara worship is that, if no Jaina be present, it can be performed by a non-Jaina, and at various times paid officiants who were brāhmans, gardeners or farmers by caste performed the ritual. The Digambara Jaina used a good deal of sanskrit in their devotions; the Śvetāmbara employ both sanskrit and Magadhi.

³⁹ K.Nambi Arooran, Glimpses of Tamil Culture Based on Periyapurānam, 1977, P.138

3.3.5 KURATTIYARS

The women teachers of Jainism were generally referred to as kurattiyar or kuratti Adigal. In the Pāṇḍya country, they took a leading part in the social and religious activities along with the men teachers of their class and held high positions as the heads of hermitages and monasteries.

The kurattiyars constitute a surprisingly unique class and distinguished from the sravikas or lay disciples who are found in all parts and from the kantis and Ajjis (Sanskrit Arya), signifying nuns and female recluses who are mentioned in the inscriptions of karnataka or from the sadhvis who are more familiar in North India⁴⁰.

A Pāṇḍya inscription of Aiyyampalayam (Aivarmalai) records that the image of the god (devar) was caused to be made by Avvanandik kurattiyar, the lady disciple of pattinikkurattiyar of perumbattiyur⁴¹.

Kurattiyar finds a mention in many kalugumalai inscriptions⁴².

⁴⁰ Sinclair, Stevenson, Heart of Jainism, 1915, P. 232.

⁴¹ ARE, 701/1905; SII, Vol. XIV, No. 117.

⁴² ARE, 30/1894; SII, Vol.V, No. 319;
ARE, 31/1884; SII, Vol.V, No. 320;
ARE, 32/1894; SII, Vol.V, No. 321;
ARE, 33/1894; SII, Vol.V, No. 322;
ARE, 34/1894; SII, Vol.V, No. 323;
ARE, 35/1894; SII, Vol.V, No. 324;
ARE, 37/1894; SII, Vol.V, No. 326;
ARE, 47/1894; SII, Vol.V, No. 336;
ARE, 66/1894; SII, Vol.V, No. 355;
ARE, 67/1894; SII, Vol.V, No. 356;

3.3.6 PALLIS

The term Pallis refers to a Jaina religious association. The numerous Jaina Pallis in the Pāṇḍya Kingdom became institutions of learning where they taught religion, philosophy, grammar and literature. During this period, Sanskrit was considered to be the language of Hindu religion, since the vedic literature was in that language. But the Jains adopted the language of the region for preaching their religion viz., Tamil and it provided an opportunity for the masses to learn and exchange their views on religion. It had a profound impact on the life and culture of the people.

The Jaina pallis located in the Pāṇḍya Kingdom were :-

- a. Perumpalli constructed during the reign of Sadaiyamaran Śrivalabha at Erukkaṅkudi in Sattur⁴³ in 1118 A.D.
- b. Tirukkatampalli in Pallimadam of Aruppukkottai noticed during the reign of Māraṅjadaiyan (Varaguna I) in 794 A.D.⁴⁴.

ARE, 80/1894; SII, Vol.V, No. 369;
 ARE, 81/1894; SII, Vol.V, No. 370;
 ARE, 82/1894; SII, Vol.V, No. 371;
 ARE, 83/1894; SII, Vol.V, No. 372;
 ARE 105/1894; SII, Vol.V, No. 394;
 ARE 106/1894; SII, Vol.V, No. 395;
 ARE 109/1894; SII, Vol.V, No. 398;
 ARE 110/1894; SII, Vol.V, No. 399.

⁴³ ARE 334/1929-30; SII, Vol.XIV, No.44

⁴⁴ ARE 430/1914; SII, Vol.XIV, No.32 and No.39
 ARE 428-A and 428 B/1914; SII, Vol.XIV, No.34 - 35

It is also an interesting feature to visualize the grants to these pallis. The Pāṇḍyan Kings showed their tolerance in the form of Pallichchandam⁴⁵. Instances of Pallichchandam are readily available in the Pāṇḍya kingdom. Only five are illustrated below :

1. One inscription of Tribhuvanachakravarti Kulaśékharadēva Pāṇḍya in 1271 A.D. records a gift of tax-free land as Pallichchandam by Ōdalansōlan Murtiyālvār of Odalapādi (North Arcot) after purchasing it from the uravar of the village to the Jaina Temple of Nāyanār Aṇiyādalagiyār⁴⁶.
2. A Sadaiyāpārai inscription of Pudukkottai of Sudarapāṇḍya I. records gift of land, tax-free to the deity of Perunarkilichchōlapperumpalli⁴⁷.
3. An Ēruvādi inscription of Nāṅgunēri during the reign of Mārāṇjadaiyan in 799 A.D. registers a gift of land by Irambāttuvēlān-Sāttan as Pallichchandam to the temple of aruvāḷattu Bhatāraka of Tiruviruttalai in Nāttārruppōkku⁴⁸.
4. A Māṅgāḍu (Cheṅgalpaṭṭu) inscription of Sundarapāṇḍya I in 1256 A.D. records gift of land as pallichchandam to a Palli whose name is not quite distinct.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Pallichchandam : Pallichchandam means an endowment in favour of a Jaina temple or monastery.

⁴⁶ ARE 142/1941-42.

⁴⁷ A Manual of Pudukkottai State, Vol.II, Pt.II, P.979.

⁴⁸ ARE 605/1915, SII, Vol.XIV, No.41

⁴⁹ ARE 358/1908

5. A Śingikulam (Nāṅgunēri) inscription of Maravarman Sundara Pāṇḍya II in 1254 A.D. mentions the Kārāṇmai Pallichchandam for the worship to the image of Enakkunallanāyakar in the Jaina temple of Nyayaparipala perumpalli⁵⁰.

3.3.7 YAKSHĪ WORKSHIP

Yakshī also called Yaksinis constitute a class of deified beings quite peculiar to the Jaina religion. They were the female attendants of the Tirthankaras, and the leaders of the women converts.

The Yakshīs noticed in the Jaina Iconography of the Pāṇḍya Kingdom shows their prominence of a higher rank in the Jaina Pantheon⁵¹. Yakshīs helped to counteract a situation wherein the Jain gods had no female counterparts in the beginning. The introduction of Yakshi workship helped Jainism to compete with the Śaivite and Vaishnavite creed and assisted it in its popularity and influence and fetched commendable success to its supporters⁵².

⁵⁰ ARE 269/1940-41.

⁵¹ P.B.Desai, Jainism in South India, Also Epigraphia Indica, Vol. 29, No.28 , Pg.90.

In the Anaimalai cave (1st - 2nd Centuries A.D.), Yakshi Siddayika is noticed.

Also Yakshi finds mention in Aiyyampālayam inscription (ARE 705/1905)

⁵² Silappadikaram, 15 : 115-118.

3.3.8. JAINA MISSIONARIES

The varied activities of a large number of eminent Jaina Saints contributed to the continuation of Jaina popularity in the Pāṇḍya Kingdom. The many instances mention the names of Jaina saints such as Indrasena, Samantabhadra, Ajjanandi etc.⁵³.

These saints and ascetics were responsible for the spread of Jainism in the Pāṇḍya Country. The literary and missionary activities helped the Jainas themselves to strengthen their position in Pāṇḍya territories.

Benevolent activities of the Jaina acharyas and others had a scintillating effect on its growth and vibrancy in the Pāṇḍya country.

A gift of 505 kanam of gold by Sāntivīrakuravar for feeding one ascetic⁵⁴ during Varaguna II's reign, a gift of some land for providing food by Siddhan also of Varaguna II's reign⁵⁵; repair of a tank by Ettisāttan alias Iruppaikkudi Kilavan, an official under Śrī Vallabha,⁵⁶ the services of Pallidaraiyan, under the Pāṇḍyan King in stopping the sea⁵⁷; the building of a sluice for a tank at Vaigai Tirumalai by Ambalapperumal under Māravaraman Virapāṇḍya Dēva I in 1344 A.D.⁵⁸;

⁵³ ARE 70/1905; SII, Vol.XIV, No.102.
ARE 729/1905; SII, Vol.XIV, No.126.
ARE 396/1954-55.
ARE 692/1905; SII, Vol.XIV, No.108.

⁵⁴ ARE, 705/1905; SII, Vol.XIV, No.22; Epigraphia Indica, Vol.XXXII, PP.335 - 38

⁵⁵ ARE, 116/1894, SII, Vol. V, No.405

⁵⁶ ARE,334/1929-30; SII, Vol.XIV, No.44

⁵⁷ ARE 563/1911

⁵⁸ ARE 84/1887; SII, Vol.I, No.69

By those benevolent activities the Jainas of the Pāṇḍya Kingdom secured the goodwill of people belonging to other faiths; thus they could also alleviate the misery of the people of other faiths.

3.4 JAINA VESTIGES

Jainism played an important role in the socio-cultural life of the Tamils. It left an indelible mark on the life and thought of the people in the Pāṇḍya Kingdom. This is amply borne out by the Jaina vestiges in the form of monuments, sculptures and paintings. The Jaina inscriptions are found widely scattered all over the Pāṇḍya Kingdom; it testified to the wide spread nature of Jainism in the Pāṇḍya Kingdom.

3.4.1 CHITARAL

Chitalar is in the Kanyakumari District.

The earliest Jain inscription⁵⁹ of the Pandya dynasty comes from Chitalar in the former Travancore state. The record in Tamil Language and Vatteluttu characters, belongs to the 28th year of the reign of Varaguna I (C.765 - 815 A.D.)⁶⁰ alias Neduñjadayan. The epigraph belongs to the last quarter of the 8th century A.D. It records a gift of golden ornaments to the Bhaṭāriyār⁶¹ of Tiruchchāranattumalai, popularly known as the holy hill of the cāranas (Jaina divinities or the Jaina Saints or bhaṭāriar), made by the lady teacher Gunantāṅgi-kurattigal, the disciple of Ariṣṭanemi Bhaṭāra of Perayakkudi.

⁵⁹ Travancore Archaeological series, Vol.1, pp.193 ff.

⁶⁰ As per the Chronology proposed by K.A.N.Sastri in 'The Pāṇḍyan Kingdom', 1972, pp.36 ff.

⁶¹ Bhaṭāra : a saint; often a suffix to proper names of Jaina Pontiffs.



3.4.2 DINDIGUL

Three Jaina Centres are noticed in Dindigul District viz., Aiyampālayam, Dēvattūr and Mēṭṭupattī. Only in Aiyampālayam there is a clear evidence of Pāṇḍya presence as it finds mention in the inscription themselves.

3.4.3 AIYYAMPĀLAYAM

Aiyampālayam (also known as Aivarmalai) is located in the Palani Taluk. Above the natural cavern on the hill called Aivarmalai and below the Jaina images, inscriptions have been discovered⁶² (refer plates). They are :-

- a. One inscription of Varaguna II dated 870 A.D. registers a gift of 505 Kāṇam of gold by Śāntivira Kuravar of Kālam, the disciple of Gunavirakkuravadigal, for offerings to the images of Pārśvabhatāra (Pārśvanātha) and of the Yakshis at Tiruvayirai, which he had renovated, and for the feeding of one ascetic⁶³.
- b. One Pāṇḍya inscription mentions the name Pārśvabhatāra and it records gift of some gold⁶⁴.

⁶² ARE, 699/1905; SII. Vol.XIV, No.115

⁶³ ARE, 705/1905; SII, Vol.XIV, No.22; Also Epigraphia Indica, Vol.XXXII, pp.335-38

⁶⁴ ARE 700/1905; SII Vol.XIV, No.116



3.4.4 KALUGUMALAI

Nearly 90 inscriptions are located in Kalugumalai in Kovilpatti Taluk. It has treasured natural caverns with beds and inscriptions in Brāhmi alphabet which show that it was a resort of Jaina ascetics in as ancient a period as the 3rd Century B.C. The inscriptions are found below the images of Tīrthaṅkaras (Refer plates)

A kalugumalai inscription records that Sāttāṅkāli of Kalakkudimaṅgalattuchchēri gifted 25 sheep for burning two perpetual lamps to the God Bhaṭāra, on hill at Tirunēchchuram. His disciple (aḍiyār) also gave 25 sheep for burning a perpetual lamp in the temple.⁶⁵

3.4.5 ERUKKAṆKUḌI

Erukkaṅkudī is situated in Sāttūr Taluk.

An inscription belonging to Sadaiyamāraṇ Śrī Vallaba of 833 A.D records the construction of a perumpallī and a maṇḍapa at Iruppaikkudī by Eṭṭisāttan alias Iruppaikkudī Kīḷavan, an official under the Pāṇḍya king. He is also stated to have repaired a tank called Palikkulam⁶⁶.

⁶⁵ ARE. 19/1894; SII, Vol.V.No.308

⁶⁶ ARE 334/1929-30; SII, Vol.XIV, No. 44.

3.4.6 PALLIMADAM

Pallimadam is situated in Aruppukkōttai Taluk. Two Pāṇḍya inscriptions have been identified on the parapet stone of the entrance into the Kālanātha Śwāmi temple. They belong to the reign of Varaguṇa I.

- a. One inscription records gift of 100 sheep for a lamp by Sāttan Guṇattān, a native of Kuṇṇūr in Nīlakkuḍināḍu, for supplying ghee to a deity in the temple, Tirukkāttāmpalli at Kuṇṇandi in Veṇbunāḍu⁶⁷.

Kuṇṇandi Tirukkāttāmpalli in Veṇbunāḍu (Aruppukkottai) was a huge monastic establishment of the Jains between the 8th and 10th centuries A.D. The exact location of the Jain Palli is not known to us since no vestiges are found in and around Pallimadam. The inscriptions referring to the Palli are found on some stones built into the Śiva temple. Obviously these stones were taken from a Jaina temple and later used for the construction of the Śiva temple⁶⁸.

- b. Another inscription of Varaguṇa I records gift of 50 sheep to Tirukkāttāmpalli at Kuṇṇandi in Veṇbu-nāḍu, in order to supply 5 nāli of ghee every day to the temple⁶⁹.

⁶⁷ ARE 430/1914; SII, Vol. XIV, No. 32.

⁶⁸ R.Champakalakshmi, "Kuṇṇandi-Tirukkāttāmpalli - An ancient Jaina Monastery of Tamil Nadu", *Studies in Indian Epigraphy*, Vol.II. 1975, p.84 ff.

⁶⁹ ARE 431/1914; SII, Vol.XIV, No. 39.

3.4.7 MADURAI

Madurai had been a flourishing centre of the Jaina faith under the fostering patronage of the Pāṇḍya Kings who had this ancient place as their favoured capital.

Jaina evidences are found in epicentres of Madurai, such as Alagarmalai, Ānaimalai, Aritṭapatti, Karungalakkudi, Kīlakkudi, Kīlakuyilkudi, Kīlavalavu, Koṅkarpuliyankuḷam, Kuppālanattam, Māṅkuḷam, Muttupatti, Pēchchipallam, Tirupparankunram, Tiruvatavur, Uttamapālayam, Varichchiyūr and Vikkiramāṅgalam. However, it is apt to study a few of the above in detail.

3.4.7.1 ĀNAIMALAI

Ānaimalai is located in the Madurai Taluk and is situated not far off from Vaigai River. It is about six miles towards the east of Madura. (Refer Plates)

- a. One Pāṇḍya inscription of 9th Century A.D. states that the Jaina image (below which the inscription is engraved) is to be protected by the officials tinaikkalattār⁷⁰.

⁷⁰ ARE 68/1905; SII, Vol.XIV, No.100

- b. Another Pāṇḍya inscription records that the sacred image was caused to be made by a certain Ēnādi Nādi for the Merit of ... aṇiyan of Kalavali - Nādu⁷¹.
- c. Yet another Pāṇḍya inscription states that the Jaina images is to be protected by the accountants (Karaṇattār) of the Village Porkōḍu⁷².
- d. The facts that a Jaina image was caused to be made by Ajjanandi and the image was to be protected by the Sabhā of Naraśingamaṅgalam is evidenced by an inscription⁷³. The revenue accountants (puruvuvariyaṛ) are also mentioned in this record.
- e. Another Pāṇḍya inscription states that the Jaina image of the Yaksha was caused to be made by a certain Cheduliyaṇḍi of Peruvembārrūr in Tenkālavalinādu⁷⁴.
- f. Another Pāṇḍya inscription registers that the sacred Jaina image was caused to be made by Eviyampūdi of Vēṭṭaṇjēri in Venbaikkūḍi in Venbaikkūḍi-nādu and that the image was to be protected by the revenue accountants (puravuvāri Kalattār)⁷⁵.

⁷¹ ARE 67/1905; SII, Vol.XIV. No.99

⁷² ARE 69/1905; SII, Vol.XIV, No.101

⁷³ ARE 70/1905; SII, Vol.XIV, No.102

⁷⁴ ARE 71/1905; SII, Vol.XIV. No.103

⁷⁵ ARE 74/1905; SII, Vol.XIV. No.106

3.4.7.2 KARUṄGĀLAKKUḌI

Karuṅgālakkuḍi is situated in Mēlur taluk [Refer Plates]

On one of the stone beds in the second cavern in the Pañchapāṇḍavarkkuṭṭu hill, a Pāṇḍya inscription registers the several acts performed by a certain Paḷḷidaraiyan, while he was in the service of the Pāṇḍya King (Valūdi, Minavan). Amongst his services were the building of a bright vimāna, stopping the sea, protecting sacrifices at Tiruppodiyil by the powers of his scholarship, asceticism and saintliness⁷⁶.

3.4.7.3 MĀṆKUḶAM

Māṅkuḷam is in Madurai Taluk. It is a Village near Arittapatti.

Māṅkuḷam inscription assumes a great significance since it throws back the date and period of Jainism in the Tamil Country and distinctly proves the fact that Jainism existed even before the arrival of Bhadrabāhu.

- a. An inscription found on a rock-cut bed in the hill locally called Kaḷugumalai during **the reign of Neduṅḡeliyan** in the period 2nd - 1st Centuries B.C. dedicates to Kaniynanta monk. This paḷḷi was caused to be given by Katalan Valūtiy, an officer paṇa-an under Nedunḡeliyan⁷⁷.

⁷⁶ ARE, 563/1911.

⁷⁷ ARE, 465/1906;
I.Mahadevan, Op.cit., Māṅkuḷam, No.1

The inscription brings to light the names of a Pāṇḍya King Neḍuñcheliyan and one of his officers, Kaḍalanvaluti. Some of the Pāṇḍya Kings of the Sangam age bore the name Neḍuñcheliyan. But it is not definite whether the king referred to in this record is identical with any one of those who find place in the Śāṅgam works, or a king much earlier to them. Kaṇinanta seems to be a reputed Jaina monk as his name occurs in some more epigraph from Māṅkuḷam.

- b. Another Māṅkuḷam inscription of the 2nd - 1st centuries B.C of Pāṇḍya Neḍuñjeliyan records the dedication to Kaṇiynanta, the monk; this monastery was made by Catikan the father of Ilañcaṭikan and brother-in-law (Sālakan) of Neḍuñceliyan⁷⁸.

3.4.7.4 UTTAMAPĀLAYAM

Uttamapālayam is in the Periyakuḷam Taluk.

- a. A boulder near the Karuppanaśwāmi rock (Refer Plates) bears a record which registers a grant of 11 kaśu by Ananta vīra - aḍigal for a lamp to the god Tirugunagiridēva and states that the aḍigal in-charge of the Palli should burn the lamp with the interest accruing out of the money granted⁷⁹.

⁷⁸ ARE 460/1906;
I.Mahadevan, Op.cit., Māṅkuḷam, No.2;
T.V.Mahalingam, A Topographical List of Inscriptions, pp.201 - 203

⁷⁹ ARE 732/1905; SII, Vol.XIV, No./128

The rock containing Jaina images at Uttamapālayam was called Tirugunagiri, and the Palli was under the control of a monk whose name is not mentioned in the record.

- b. Another Uttamapālayam inscription above the first three images in the first row on the karuppanṇaśwāmi rock (Refer plates) of Pāṇḍya Srimāra Śrivalabha in 835 A.D is a much damaged record and the details of the record are not given in the epigraphical report⁸⁰.
- c. Yet another inscription below the first image on the Karuppanṇaśwāmi rock seems to record that the image was caused to be made by Śiddha.... son of a person whose name is lost, hailing from the village venbaikkarai in venbaikkudinādu⁸¹.
- d. Ajjanandi, the Jaina āchārya finds mention in one Uttampālayam inscription found below the tenth Jaina image carved on the Karuppanṇaśwāmi rock⁸².

3.4.8 AMMĀCHATRAM

Ammāchatram is situated on the Tiruchi - Pudukkottai highway and is in the Kulattūr Taluk.

⁸⁰ ARE 722/1905

⁸¹ ARE, 723/1905; SII, Vol.XIV, No.120

⁸² ARE 729/1905; SII, Vol.XIV, No.126

Two inscriptions are found on a rock in the hill known as Āluruttimalai.

- a. One Sundarapāṇḍya I [1216 - 1238 A.D] inscription records gift of 2 mā of land as Pallichchandam in Periyapallivayal to the god Tirumalaiālvār. The land was granted by Dharmadēva-āchārya, the disciple of Kantachandrapaṇḍita and the disciple (name lost) of Tiruppallimalaiālvār. The boundaries of the land are also mentioned in the inscription.⁸³

The hill which bears the name Āluruttimalai was once called Tiruppallimalai and the presiding deity of the hill was known as Tiruppallimalai - ālvār. Two images of Tirthankaras are carved on one side of the hill.

- b. Another Āluruttimalai inscription of Sundarapāṇḍya I is an incomplete and damaged record and it mentions Dharmadēva - Āchārya, the pupil of Kanakachandra Paṇḍita, the Jaina Teacher.⁸⁴

3.4.9 ŚITTANNAVĀŚAL

Śittannavāśal is located in Kulattur Taluk. It is a village about ten miles North - West of the town of Pudukkottai.

⁸³ ARE, 367/1904; SII, Vol.XVII, No.397

⁸⁴ ARE, 364/1904; SII, Vol.XVII, No.397

It possesses a natural cavern which contains seventeen beds with pillows cut into the rock (Refer Plates)

Śittannavāśal is the name given to a long range of hills, which literally connotes 'the abode of the revered Siddhas or Jaina monks'. The Word Siddha is pronounced as Śitta in Tamil and Vasal means 'the dwelling place'.

There is a cave temple excavated in the rock, the Arivar - koil or 'the temple of Arhat'. A unique concept of the cave temple is its paintings.

An inscription of Srimāra Śri Vallabha (815 - 862 A.D.) found on the rock to the South of the rock-cut Jaina Temple [Refer Plates] records that Ilaṅgautaman, Known as Madiraiāśiriyān, repaired the inner maṇḍapa and built another maṇḍapa in front of the temple called Arivarkōil (Arhat temple) and the place is known as Anṇalvāyil. Some gifts of lands were also made to the priests of the temple⁸⁵.

The Maṇḍapa of this temple had been repaired by Ilaṅgautaman a teacher from Madurai, during the reign of Śrimāra Śrivallabha.

The Paintings executed on the ceiling of the Maṇḍapa are also now assigned to the time of the same Pāṇḍya King.

⁸⁵ ARE, 368/1904; (also 215/1940-41);

SII, Vol.XIV, No.45;

Also K.R.Srinivasan, "A note on the date of the Śittannavāśal Paintings",
The proceedings of the Indian History Congress, Madras, 1944

3.4.10 TIRUNELVELI DISTRICT

Four Jaina Vestiges are found in Tirunelveli. They are Ēruvāḍi, Kurralam, Mārukāltalai and Śingikulam.

However only in Ēruvāḍi and Śingikulam Jaina inscriptions of Pandyas can be found.

3.4.10.1 ĒRUVĀDI

Ēruvāḍi is situated in Naṅgunēri Taluk.

On a boulder in the Irattāipottai rock, an inscription of Mārāñḍaiyan in 799 A.D. registers a gift of land by Irambāttuvēlan - Sāttan as Pallichchandam to the temple of Aruvāḷattu Bhaṭāraka of Tiruviruttalai in Nāttārruppōkku.

The donor had at the end exhorts all to offer worship to the Aruhan on the hill⁸⁶.

There is a mention of pāppācānrār of kīlccēri in Nāttukkurumbu as the protectors and executors of the grant. It appears that the learned brāhmaṇas (pārppār) of kīlccēri were entrusted with the task of managing this grant made to a Jaina deity⁸⁷.

⁸⁶ ARE 605/1915; SII, Vol.XIV, NO.41

⁸⁷ A.Chakravarti, Jaina Literature in Tamil, (ed. K.V.Ramesh), 1941, Notes p.153

3.4.10.2 ŚINGIKULAM

Śingikulam is situated in the Nāṅgunēri Taluk.

- a. On the west and South walls of the Bhagavati temple on the hill, an inscription of Māravarman Tribhuvanachakravarti Sundarapāṇḍya II in 1253 - 54 A.D. records the remission of taxes on two plots of Pallichchandam lands, endowed for the worship in the temple of Nyāyaparipāla perumpalli⁸⁸.
- b. Another inscription of Māravarman Sundarapāṇḍya II in 1254 A.D. found on the North Wall of the Bhagavati temple on the hill records the ulvari giving effect to an order of the king issued at the request of the Minister Anṇan Tamiḷappallavaraiyar, remitting the taxes on two plots of land endowed after purchase from the nagarattar of Rājarājapuram by Matisāgaran Adibhaṭṭārakan of Pugalokarnathanallur in Pugalōkanāthavaḷanāḍu, as Kārāṇmaipallichchandam for the worship to the image of Enakkunallanāyakar in the Jaina temple of Nyāyaparipāla perumapalli, set up by the donor on the hill at Tiḍiyūr called Jinagirimāmalai in the name of Tamiḷappallavaraiyan, who is called Oruvārunarndān Enakkunallaperumāl and who is stated to be a native of Rājavallavapuram in Kīlyēmba - Nāḍu⁸⁹.

⁸⁸ ARE 270/1940-41

⁸⁹ ARE, 269/1940-41

CHAPTER IV

DECLINE OF JAINISM

4.0 INTRODUCTION

Decline of Jainism was due to various forces both internal and external. Although Jainism had made much headway in the Pāṇḍya Kingdom, it failed to be a popular religion among the masses. As far as the Pāṇḍya Kingdom was concerned, Jainism was more an alien faith because of its North Indian origin and its lack of mass appeal. In mass appeal Jainism was no match to its arch-rival Brahmanical Hindu religion and thereby it failed to muster enough strength to withstand the religiosity of Brahmanical Hindus.

Jainism declined in the Pāṇḍya kingdom. The decline was not sudden. It was a slow process. In fact, the seeds of decline was sown with the emergence and growth of Bhakti cult in the Tamil country. The process of decline reached its culmination in the 13th Century.

Various factors led to the decline and fall of Jainism in the Pāṇḍya kingdom and those causative factors are categorised as factors from within and without ie., internal and external factors.

4.1 INTERNAL FACTORS

Internal factors which caused the decline were innate and inbred in Jainism. The decay of Jainism in the Pāṇḍya kingdom was a product of its own and thus inherent. The process of decay within Jainism was slow. But efforts

to arrest the decay and steps to popularise it became more counter productive and corrosive in result. The factors such as stringent religious code, Digambaram, weak Jaina missionaries and the corruption of worship in Jainism ultimately paved the way for the decline of Jainism in the 13th Century.

4.1.1 STRINGENT RELIGIOUS CODE

The code of discipline, abstinence and morals were too stringent and austere to follow. A Jaina ascetic has to confirm to 28 rigid principles. He has to pledge himself not to kill any life or cause any harm to living beings, to speak truth always, never to steal, observe complete abstinence and eschew all worldly desires, abhor abusive language, control of the five senses and several others.

As long as the mind is attuned to the spirit of all these things they might have helped them towards their advancement. But when that was not there, they had produced horror and embarrassment amidst the members of the society and in course of time, they lost their simplicity and purity.

Selfishness overshadowed all other things and some of the Jains, by their perverted knowledge in logic and black magic dragged those of other religions for controversy.

4.1.2 DIGAMBARAM (NAKEDNESS)

Nakedness proved to be detrimental to Jainism in the eyes of the public and it paved the way for its unpopularity and decline.¹

Nudity in fact, is an assurance of the man being self-restrained victorious over the feelings of shame and sex-love. The covering of the body is considered as a hindrance to Nirvana. To renounce even the cloths may be an act of utter detachment to the worldly things. However it failed to impress upon the people.

4.1.3 JAINA MISSIONARIES

The moral code followed by the Jains gradually vanished. Jain monks became pedantic. The monks casting away all their traditional seclusion attempted to acquire ecclesiastical power. They subordinated religious tenets to political exigencies.² The craze for ecclesiastical power, lack of zeal and lack of organisational talents also paved the way for decline of Jainism in the long run.

LACK OF ZEAL AND ORGANISATIONAL TALENT

Jains' indifference and lack of constructive approach to face Hindu revivalism proved to be detrimental to the future of the Jaina faith. Jainism failed to produce teachers with enterprising spirit who could understand the full import of Hindu religious revival.

¹ Rajamanickam Pillai, Pallavar Varalāru (Tamil), Madras, 1977.

² B.A.Saletore, Medieval Jainism (Bombay, 1938), p.7.

During the eighth and ninth centuries A.D. it was beset with insurmountable difficulties. The great leaders whom Jainism gave to the country were mostly buried in their theological works; their indifference to the material changes that took place around them; and their incompetent organisational talents were detrimental to the growth of Jainism in the Pāṇḍya kingdom.

4.1.4 JAINA PREACHINGS

Jainism which was devoid of an incomprehensible and omnipotent supernatural force above all mundane things left a great vacuum to be filled up. It did not appeal to the Hindu mind which obviously needed a God who could receive and reward passionate devotion.

Another defect in the Jaina teachings was that they were too abstract and subtle to easily catch the exuberant imagination of the average intellectual man. For instance, the doctrines of Śyadvāda and Nirvana³ were beyond the scope of comprehension by men of average intellectual abilities and there were no substitutes for them even.

4.1.5 CORRUPTION OF WORSHIP

Corruption of worship played a major role in the decline of Jainism. Corruption gradually crept in by their contact with people of various practices, customs and methods. Its original purity was tainted by the introduction of undesirable changes and the religion which started with the condemnation of

³ For an explanation of the terms Śyadvāda and Nirvana refer Appendix 26.

the rituals ended by becoming more ritualistic as Brahmanism. Preservation of religious purity was given secondary importance and thereby Jaina puritans lost their interest in the religious pursuits. Worship was changed mainly to suit the converts from other faiths which back-fired the Jaina religion itself. The system of worship thus diluted in course of time began to adopt many of the Hindu minor Gods⁴. The changes were so great that they practically destroyed the individuality of that religion.

Another instance, more telling than any other, was the inclusion by the Jains of the Hindu Avatar Krishna in their list of the future Tīrthaṅkaras of whom Krishna was to become the 12th, Amama by name. In the list of future Tīrthaṅkaras was included Baladeva, Krishna's brother, who not only became the 14th Tīrthaṅkara Nishpulāka, but also Krishna's mother, Devakī, who became the 11th Tīrthaṅkara Munisuvrata, Baladeva's mother, Rohini, who became Chitrāgupta, the 16th Tīrthaṅkara, the Hindu ascetic Dvaipāyana, who set fire to Dvārakā and Kunika, who in his past life was Javakumāra. The former became Yasodhara, the 19th Tīrthaṅkara and the latter becomes Vijaya the 20th Tīrthaṅkara. Thus they were inclined in early days to absorb popular Hindu mythology.

4.1.6 CASTE DISTINCTIONS AND DIVISIONS

Jainism does not recognise castes as such and at the same time the Jaina books do not specifically obstruct the observance of caste rules by the members of the Jaina community.

⁴ They came to be called Kshetrapalas or protectors of the place.

The attitude of Jainism towards caste is that it is one of the social practices, unconnected with religion, observed by people; and it was none of its business to regulate the working of the caste system. The Jains were not in favour of caste system. In fact, Jainism decried caste system. They practised endogamy which was contradictory to their belief on caste system⁵.

Caste distinctions and divisions, that were once brushed aside, were re-imposed and they became active with all their rigidity. This sapped the vitality of the Jain community though it continued to survive in ever decreasing numbers.

4.1.7 EMERGENCE OF WEALTHY MATHAS

Besides religious persecution, another factor that brought slackness in the activities of the Jainas was the emergence of wealthy mutts. The kings, princes and the common people gave grants of land and other gifts to Jaina establishments. The original standard of non-possession of property was set aside, and the preceptors went to the extent of acquiring lands granted to the temples for their own purposes. Thus the ground for corruption was prepared; simplicity and modesty were pushed to the background.

⁵ Vilas, Sangave, *Jaina Community - A Social Survey*, (Bombay, 1959), pp.74-85.

4.1.8 RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE

The main cause for the decline of Jainism was that it gave up the spirit of toleration which characterised it at the beginning and in due course became an aggressive religion.

These are external factors which played a very major role in the extinction of Jaina faith. These include the role of Bhakti cult, lack of royal patronage, non-availability of cultivable lands, establishment of mathas and the effects of Muslim rule.

The Jains adopted a fanatical attitude and started religious persecution with official sanction⁶. Their intolerance had gone to the extent of setting fire to the house of Sambandhar⁷.

The story of Murtinayanar in Periapuranam gives a vivid description of religious intolerance showed by the Jaina kings towards Śaivism. Periapuranam gives a vivid description of the invasion of the Pāṇḍya country by a Vatuka-karunata king, a follower of Jainism and his intolerance towards Śaivism⁸.

⁶ Elliot, Coins of Southern India, (Trubner, 1886), p.126.

⁷ Ottakkuthar, Takkayagapparani 6, Thalilai 171-220.

⁸ Periyapurāṇam - Murtinarayanar - Stanza 11
See Appendix 3.

4.2. EXTERNAL FACTORS

These are external factors which played a very major role in the extinction of Jaina faith. These include the role of Bhakti cult, lack of royal patronage, non-availability of cultivable lands, establishment of mathas and the effects of Muslim role.

4.2.1 BHAKTI CULT

The decline of Jainism in the Pāṇḍya kingdom was gradual. The growth of Jainism and the fanatical attitude of the Jains awakened the leaders of Hindu religion who launched into the field to safeguard their own religions. This was the beginning of the religious awakening in the Tamil land. The Bhakti movement⁹ spread to the Pāṇḍya kingdom during the 7th-8th centuries under the Nayanmars and the Alvars whose dynamism, captivating Bhajans and poor feeding led to mass mobilization and identification with the common man and these took the wind out of the sails of Jainism.

The pugnacious activity of religious reformers and sectarian leaders divided the people into sects fermently hostile to one another¹⁰. Jainism would not have been so completely obliterated from the Pāṇḍya Kingdom, but for the persistent, vigorous and militant activities of the defenders of the Vedic faith.

⁹ Bhakti movement is the warp and woof of popularism in Hinduism. - T. Chinnathambi, "Bhakti Movement in Indian Culture", The contributions of the Tamils to Indian Culture, Vol.IV, 1994, p.1.

¹⁰ N.Venkataramanyya, The early Muslim expansion in South India, University of Madras, 1942, p.11.

The causes of the Hindu revival were more cultural. The Hindus attached greater importance to the preservation of their religion and culture. When anyone transgressed the limits and displayed a tendency to interfere with their religious institutions, they shook off their apathy and girded up their loins to resist his encroachments and put down his tyranny¹¹.

The Bhakti cult¹² embodied in the revival of Śaivism and Vaishnavism was a reaction against Vedic exclusiveness and Jaina asceticism and it provided the preceptor as an essential factor to attain salvation. Sekkilar gives a meaningful phrase to describe bhakti and worship - 'worship through love with pointed devotion', (Kutum Anpinil Kumpital)¹³. Ideologically speaking, the Bhakti Movement started reviving most of the unique as well as inherent cultural elements of the Tamils, infusing them with a new life. The devotional cult was developed on the line of the ancient Tamil tradition of Akam and Puram poetry, presenting God as a lover and the soul as a bride on the one hand and the God as a patron and the devotee as a bard. The emotional Bhakti wave which swept the whole of Tamilnadu spread as a powerful current shaking the very roots of Jainism in the Pāṇḍya kingdom too. To secure the required ebullition of emotion, visits to holy places, acts of memorial service in temples and the pouring out of one's heart in verse and dancing were

¹¹ Ibid, p.163.

¹² Bhakti cult arose to emphasize the monotheistic character prevalent in Hinduism - T. Chinnathambi, 'Bhakti Movement in Indian Culture', The contributions of the Tamils to Indian Culture, Vol.4. 1994, p.8.

¹³ Periyapuram, Tirukutaccirappu, 8.

introduced¹⁴. They had a tremendous appeal to common folk, but in many instances also converted monks and local rulers from Jainism to Śaivism or Vaishnavism. Indeed, so powerful was the Bhakti movement that it eclipsed and eventually succeeded in totally eliminating Jainism in South India¹⁵.

The changes in Hinduism considerably increased its influence and secured the adherence, loyalty and devotion of common man. Concomitant with these events, there occurred a veritable explosion of temple building activity. The creative energies of the people were channelled into multifarious expressions of religious devotion¹⁶.

Bhakti movement appealed to all strata of society, regardless of caste or gender. Women and untouchables were included in their ranks, in sharp contrast to the religious tradition of the "twice born" based on the Vedas, from which untouchables, Sudras and in large measure woman had been rigorously excluded¹⁷.

The rise of the Śaiva Saints and the Vaishṇava Alvars and their intensive and active propaganda, the triumphant disputations¹⁸ and holy

¹⁴ Ramaswami, *Studies in South Indian Jainism*, (Madras, 1922), pp.61-70.

¹⁵ K.A.N. Sastri, *A history of South India*, Madras, 1976, pp.422-439.

¹⁶ K.A.N. Sastri, *The Culture and History of the Tamils*, (Calcutta, 1964), pp.154-169.

¹⁷ A.K.Ramanujam, "Afterword", in *Hymns for the Drowning* (Princeton, New Jersey Princeton University Press, 1981, pp.103-169).

¹⁸ See Appendix 4.

peregrinations¹⁹ and the establishment of mutts and organization in important centres of Śaiva and Vaiṣṇavite persuasions, all effectively wiped out Jainism from the Pāṇḍya kingdom by about the 13th Century. Quatrain 243 of the Nāladi shows the feeling of hostility that existed between the Hindus and Jains²⁰.

4.2.2 METHODS ADOPTED BY NĀYANMĀRS AND ĀLVĀRS

The Śaiva Nāyanmārs and the Vaiṣṇava Ālvārs²¹ had recourse to various methods, which they seem to have borrowed from the Jainas themselves, to subvert the religion of the latter in the Pandya kingdom. Firstly, the Śaivas and the Vaiṣṇavas counteracted the universal effect of the most potent weapon of the Jainas as expressed in their well-known gifts-āhāra-abhaya-bhaisajya-Śāstra-dāna, (food, shelter etc.) by adopting the same policy to meet their own ends. This is proved by the stories of the Śaiva Saints

¹⁹ Taking for instance, the peregrinations of the Śaiva Nayanmars the number of places visited by them in the Pāṇḍya country are as follows:

Śambandhar	-	13
Appar	-	4
Sundarar	-	15

■ See Appendix 5.

²¹ Among the alvars, Nammālvar and his disciple Madhurakavi, Peria-ālvār and his daughter Āndaḷ were born in Pāṇḍyanādu and had a large hand in spreading the tenets of Vaiṣṇavism.

The Nayanmars who were born in Pāṇḍyanādu were Kulacciraiyār, Ninraśir Nedumāran, Mangaiyarkaraśiar and Murthiyāar.

Iḷeyāṇḍakudi - māranāyanār, Mūkhanāyanār, and very many others.²² The Nayanmars were flexible as far as the caste system was concerned. This accounts for the inclusion of the fisherman saint Atibhaktanāyanār in the list of the Sixty-three saints. Thirdly, the Śaiva saints aimed at the highest altruistic principles, also in imitation of the Jainas²³. Fourthly, the Śaiva saints composed hymns in honour of the local deities and especially of Śiva, obviously after the manner of the Jainas, who worshipped their Tīrthaṅkaras in their Paḷḷis. Fifthly, the Śaiva saints instituted the hierarchy of Sixty-three saints exactly as the Jainas had done with their sixty-three personages called Trisasti-Śalāka-Purusas²⁴.

4.2.3 TIRUGÑĀNA SAMBANDAR

Tirugñāna Sambandar was the precocious Brahman child saint of the 7th century who was born in Siyāli (Sirkāli) in the Tanjore district and who lived only 16 years yet authored the first three books of the Tirumurai Scriptures in Tamil²⁵.

He toured the South to sing the glories of God Śiva and revive the waning spirit of Śaivism, then threatened by Jainism which enjoyed royal

²² Dr. Shama Sastry was the first to draw attention to this - Madras Archaeological Report, 1925, p.10.

²³ Ibid, p.11

²⁴ Ibid; p.6

²⁵ P.S. Somasundaram, Tirugñāna Sambandhar, Philosophy and Religion, Madras, 1986, pp.209-215.

support²⁶. Periyapurānam or the Tirutṭoṇḍarpurāna, composed by Sekkilār in A.D. 1150 provide us the details in connection with this celebrated figure which are essential for fixing chronologically the downfall of the Jainas in the Tamil Country. Also called as Piḷḷe Nāyanār, Tiruḡṇāṇa Sambandar was the contemporary of Kūṇpāṇḍya, the king of Madurai; Jinasena, a great Jaina teacher; Vādibhasimha, a celebrated Jaina scholar who disputed with Tiruḡṇāṇa Sambandhar on the merits of Śaivism and Appar or Tirunavukarasar²⁷.

4.2.4 CONVERSION OF KŪN PĀṆDYA OR ARIKESARI

When Kūṇ pāṇḍya (A.D. 670-710) was reigning in Madurai his queen Mangayarkarasi extended an invitation to Gṇāṇasambandar²⁸. Responding to the invitation, Gnanasambandar came to Madura along with his friend Appar and ruined the Jains in religious disputation²⁹. The Pāṇḍya king who was a Jain himself became a convert to Śaivism and tradition says that 8,000 Jains were impaled.³⁰

²⁶ Indian Historical Quarterly, 1925, Pp. 478-480.

²⁷ B.A. Saletore, Medieval Jainism, (Bombay, 1938), p.274.

²⁸ See Appendix 6.

²⁹ The puram passage (166:5) should perhaps be taken to support the deep rooted antagonism existing between Vedic Brahmanism and the Jaina Creeds - K.A.N. Sastri, Sangam Literature, Its cults and Cultures, Madras, 1972, Pp.77-78.

³⁰ Indian Historical Quarterly, 1925, Pp.478-480.

4.2.5 RELIGIOUS CONFRONTATION

K.A.N. Sastri erroneously doubts the authenticity of the above episode. But the following facts clearly illustrate the religious carnage that had happen in Madurai, the capital of the Pāṇḍya Kings.

A series of frescoes on the walls of the Golden Lily tank of the well known Mīnakshī Temple at Madurai³¹ portray the darker and sadder side of the struggle between the Jaina leaders and the Hindu reformers of the tenth and eleventh centuries. The downfall of Jainism in South India is traced to this period. Here on the walls of the same temple are found paintings depicting the persecution and impaling of the Jainas at the instance of Tirugnana Sambandhar. And what is still more unfortunate is that even now the whole tragedy is gone through at five of the twelve annual festivals at the famous Madurai temple³².

Periyapurānam portrays the impalement of 8,000 Jaina ascetics that took place during the reign of Arikesari.³³ According to a tradition the villages of Mēlakīlavu and Kilkilavu near Solavandan are so named because the stakes (Kīlavu) planted for the destruction of the Jains in the time of Tirugnānasambanda extended so far from the town of Madurai.

³¹ Ramaswami Ayyangar, *Studies in South Indian Jainism*, (Madras, 1922), P.79.

³² B.A. Saletore, *Medieval Jainism*, (Bombay, 1938), p.279.

³³ See Appendix 7.

In the Madurai and Tirunelvely Districts vestiges of the old persecutions of the Jains in the form of Kaluvettal or impaling is found. "The model of a human head is stuck on a pike and carried in a procession, some sit as if impaled on a stake; others appear to be hanging from the gibbets, etc. The idea of the performance is to suggest mutilation and there can be little doubt that it is intended to commemorate the savage treatment, which the Jainas of ancient period received at the hands of their Śaiva persecutors³⁴.

Nambiandar Nambi also supports the view of persecution of Jainas in his songs on Sambandar³⁵.

Tondaradippodiyalvar condemns and considers it his duty to chop off the heads of the Jains³⁶.

The reverses sustained by the Jains during the time of Appar and Sambandar did not crush the Jain faith completely. They only weakened and reduced the prestige of the Jains in the Tamil Country and they sank into numerical and political obscurity. Jainism continued to exist in the monasteries, which besides being centres of religious life, were also functioning as literary schools³⁷.

³⁴ Tinnevely Gazetteer, I, Pp. 100-101.
Madura Gazetteer, I, Pp. 74, 297;
Mysore Archaeological Report, 1925, p.15.

³⁵ See Appendix 8.

³⁶ See Appendix 9.

³⁷ B.A. Saletore, Medieval Jainism, (Bombay, 1938), Pp.243-248.

The Jains after their persecution in the Pallava and Pāṇḍya kingdoms migrated in large numbers to their sacred religious centres such as Śravanabelgola in Mysore and sought refuge under the Ganga rulers³⁸.

4.2.6 IDENTITY CRISIS

The majority of the masses were illiterate and were not able to understand the Jaina philosophical and religious concepts³⁹. Even the literate mass were not able to understand the Sanskrit texts concerned with religion and philosophy. The adoption of Sanskrit by the Jains to re-state their doctrines gave way to a religious reaction in favour of orthodox brahmanism and Śaivism.

Thus Jainism entered the Pāṇḍya country, where the people, the language, the culture and so on are different from its own. Jainism though it adapted itself to the Tamil people in the initial stages, it failed to preach the people in their own language and teach the religion accordingly so as to harmonize it with the culture of the recipients. Nativization was thus vital and important. The aristocratic and the informed people of the Jain community might have understood the doctrines of Jainism directly, when it was preached without nativizing. But most of the uninformed lay men might have found it

³⁸ In Mysore it was stamped out by Lingayat rising and by the advent of Ramanuja in the 12th Century A.D.

K.V. Subramania Aiyar, "Origin and decline of Buddhism and Jainism in South India", Indian Antiquary, Vol.40, 1911, p.218.

³⁹ T. Chinnathambi, 'Bhakti Movement in Indian Culture', The contribution of the Tamils to Indian Culture, Vol.4, 1994, p.8.

difficult to comprehend it and receive it unto themselves without the nativization of that religion and thereby arose identity crisis in the Pāṇḍya kingdom.

4.2.7 ABSENCE OF FERTILE LANDS

Absence of fertile lands in the near vicinity is yet another reason for the downfall of Jainism in the Pāṇḍya kingdom. All the Jaina epicentres are located in the hilly terrains. For example Kaḷugumalai is a dry arid region with a few green pastures. Hence the Jaina pallis in this region are economically weak and could not support the ascetics who in turn failed to kindle the laymen. Hence people moved to fertile regions and they started occupying the northern parts of Tamilnadu.

4.2.8 LACK OF ROYAL PATRONS

With all its liberal attitudes royal patronage tended to be fickle and fanatical in some cases. The political downfall of the royal patrons who had for centuries fostered the cause of Jainism was a great blow to that religion. Jainism, as a result of this, received a shock from the effects of which it never recovered. This is largely true of Jainism in the Pāṇḍya country from about the middle of the seventh century.

Pāṇḍya ruler Arikesari Māravarman popularly known as Kūṇ Pāṇḍya (A.D. 670-710) and his conversion from Jainism to Śaivism dealt a severe blow to the cause of the Jaina religion. Jaina law was challenged; Jaina philosophy was questioned; Jaina religious practices were discredited everywhere.

Polemics were raised; disputations were held between the supporters of rival creeds regarding their superiority, proofs were demanded; and sometimes even ordeals and miracles were resorted to. The elated victors backed by the authority of the State indulged in violent activities. The vanquished were pursued and persecuted⁴⁰.

Lack of royal patronage, support from aristocracy or the newly established trading groups paved the way for the waning of Jaina influence and ended in the conversion of centres, sacred to the Jainas to a Hindu temple in the thirteenth century. Thus instead of falling into disuse, the place of worship passed on to the Hindus and Jainism receded to the background.

Some of the cave temples such as Malaiyadikkurichi⁴¹ and Pechhipparai⁴² in Tirunelveli, Tirupparankunram⁴³ and Anaimalai⁴⁴ in Madurai were converted as Hindu temples.

⁴⁰ Facts like the grants to Jaina Pallis, endowments and Pallichchandam raise a warning against a wholesale acceptance of the stories of the persecution and extirpation of Jainism so freely recounted in the hagiology of the Hindu sects.

⁴¹ Jaina Art and Architecture, Bharatiya Jnanpith, Vol. II, P. 208.

⁴² The abrupt stoppage of the Jaina cave temple at Pechhipparai shows the rising influence of Saivism.

⁴³ Jaina Art and Architecture, Vol. II, P.208.

⁴⁴ The rock-cut cave temple dedicated to Narasimha represents a deliberate Vaishnava excavation.

Also K.V.Raman, Some aspects of Pāṇḍyan History in the light of recent discoveries, University of Madras, 1972, P.70.

4.2.9 EMERGENCE OF AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY

Another social change served as a vital cause of the near extinction of Jainism. Śilappadikaram clearly reveal the fact that Jainism was supported mainly by the rising business community which was in the highest stratum of the society when Jainism was at the height of its glory.

In Tamilnadu, it was mainly the religion of the merchant class which was next to the ruling aristocracy. Circumnavigation as well as inland trade indirectly helped the growth of Jainism. In course of time in the place of circumnavigation, cultivation of the inland areas was given much attention. Consequently, the agrarian clans became rich and powerful and was supported by the mighty rulers. These people embraced mainly Hinduism, the religion of their rulers.

4.2.10 ESTABLISHMENT OF MUTTS

The Mutts of the Śaivas mentioned by Sekkilār as having existed as early as the age of Sambandhar, probably grew in imitation of the Jaina Mutts⁴⁵. Later they sprang into existence in large numbers preserving and patronising Śaiva literature, promoting Śaiva religion and works and otherwise safeguarding the Śaiva interests. These organizations had plenty of properties. Their influence was sectarian. They served educational and poor law purposes also. Thus these Mutts stifled the growth of Jainism in the Pāṇḍya territories and there was not much scope for it⁴⁶.

⁴⁵ K.R.Subramanian, The Origin of Śaivism and its History in the Tamil land, (New Delhi, 1985), P.75.

⁴⁶ Madras Epigraphical Report, 1909, PP. 103-105.

4.2.11. MUSLIM INVASION

The outbreak of the fratricidal war between the sons of Maravarman Kulasekhara Pāṇḍya and the eruption of the Musalman hordes from the north under Malik Kafur threw the empire into utmost confusion and encouraged ambitious monarchs in the neighbourhood to take advantage of the misfortune of the Pāṇḍyas⁴⁷. The Muslim invasions and occupation of parts of South India in the early decades of the fourteenth century by Muslims also led to the downfall of Jainism.

The ebbing tide of the Jaina influence was further weakened by the continuous onslaught and ever encroaching waves of Muslim aggression which led to the spread of Islam in an ever increasing manner in the Pāṇḍya Kingdom⁴⁸.

The Muslim rule followed by Nayaks also began to neglect Jaina institution and consequently Jainism with a long innings of fifteen centuries succumbed to the adverse forces from within and without.

⁴⁷ N. Venkataramanyya, *The early muslim expansion in South India*, University of Madras, 1942, p.8.

⁴⁸ S.R. Balasubramanyan & K. Venkatarangam Raju, Jaina vestiges in the Pudukkottah State, *Quarterly Journal of Mythic Society*, Vol.24, p.211.

CHAPTER V

VESTIGES OF JAINISM

5.0 INTRODUCTION

Jainism made much headway in the kingdom of the Pāṇdyas in spite of its vicissitudes. Jainism existed with a limited following over a long period of fifteen centuries in the Pāṇḍya kingdom. Though Jainism could not emerge as the religion of the majority in the Pāṇḍya kingdom, it made lasting impact on the life of the Tamils. The vestiges of Jainism and its impact could be seen in Tamil Literature and Art.

5.1 JAINISM IN TAMIL LITERATURE

The credit of enriching the Tamil literature by composing various works on didactics, grammar, prosody and lexicography and commentaries goes to the Jaina scholars¹.

The Jains took more and more interest in the Tamil literature and Jaina poets have left behind a rich legacy of religious literature. These Jaina authors cultivated the language with much more keenness and avidity and produced literature of the type of Jivakacintamani, the beauties of which are universally admired by Tamil scholars.

A large number of Jaina works appear to have been destroyed during the tide of Hindu revival and consequently the contributions of the Jaina poets in the Pāṇḍya kingdom are fewer than those in the Kannada Literature.

¹ R. Narasimhacharya, History of Kannada Literature, 1940, p.67.

5.1.1 NALADIYAR²

It derives its name from the nature of the metre, just as the Quatrain or 4 lines in venba metre. The work consists of 400 quatrains and is also called the Velālar Vedam, the Bible of the cultivators³.

Never desire evil, nor eat with improper persons, nor lie-these Jaina ethics are enshrined in Quatrain 80⁴.

Adultery is condemned in Naladiyar. Few instances are noted in Quatrain 81⁵ and 82 and others⁶.

Penitence puts sin to flight is endorsed by Quatrain 51⁷.

Renunciation of desire is 'greatness' and is emphasised in Quatrain 181 and others⁸.

². i. Naladiyar, text Ed.by U.Pushparatha Chettiyar, Madras, 1869.

ii. The Naladiyar (or) the Four Hundred quatrains in Tamil - Ed.with English Translation, G.U.Pope, Oxford, 1893.

³. G.U.Pope, Ibid, P.vii.

⁴. See Appendix 10

⁵. See Appendix 11

⁶. See Appendix 12

⁷. See Appendix 13

⁸. See Appendix 14

Noninjury is also stressed in this work⁹.

It is not the work of a single author. A tradition¹⁰ narrates that once upon a time 8000 Jaina ascetics who lived in the 3rd or 4th century A.D. driven by famine in the North, migrated to the Pāṇḍya Country whose king supported them. When the period of famine was over they wanted to return to their country, while the king desired to retain these scholars at his court. At last the ascetics resolved to depart secretly without the knowledge of the king and they left in a body one night. In the next morning it was found that each had left on his seat a palm-leaf containing a quatrain. Out of these only 400 were collected by the order of the king and this collection is known by the name *Naladiyar*¹¹.

These 8000 Jaina ascetics are ascribed to the followers of Bhadrabāhu who migrated to the south on account of the 12 years famine in Northern India; and this would place the composition of the work somewhere about the 3rd century B.C.¹².

⁹. See Appendix 15

¹⁰. G.U.Pope, *Op.Cit.*, P.viii;
M.S.Ramaswami Ayyangar, *Op.Cit.*, PP.56-57.

¹¹. The stanzas themselves testify to the fact that this is not the work of a single author but of many belonging to the same school and age. That is why there is a repetition of ideas as in stanzas 207 and 210 and similarity of expression as in stanzas 230 and 238.

¹². V.Srinivasan, '*Madurai and Tamil Literary Tradition*', *Quarterly Journal of Mythic Society*, Vol.32, 1941-42 assigns the period between A.D. 600 and 750.

5.1.2 KAVYA LITERATURE

Kavya literature is generally divided into 2 groups: major kavyas and the minor kavyas.

The major kavyas are five in number (Aimperun-kappiyangal) namely Cintamani, Śilappadikāram, Manimekalai, Vaḷaiyāpati and Kuṇḍalakēśi. Among these, Cintāmaṇi, Śilappadikāram and Vaḷaiyāpati are by Jain authors and have the vestiges of Jaina Philosophy and its influence.

5.1.2.1 VAḶAIYĀPATI

This work is almost completely lost to the world. From the stray stanzas available, it is evident that Vaḷaiyāpati was composed by a Jaina author¹³. What the framework of the story was, who the author was, and when he lived are all matters of mere conjecture.

A few instances in this work lays stress on non-killing and thus advocates ahimsa¹⁴. Yet another instance of non-killing is portrayed in another stanza¹⁵.

¹³. S.Vaiyapuri Pillai, A History of Tamil Language and Literature, 1956, PP.160-161.

He adds that the Vaḷaiyāpati has, except for a few citations, completely disappeared. Even the story of the Poem is not known.

¹⁴. See Appendix 16

¹⁵. See Appendix 17

5.1.2.2 ŚILAPPADIKĀRAM¹⁶

The 'epic of the anklet' is a very important Tamil Classic, in as much as it is considered to serve as a land-mark for the chronology of Tamil Literature. Its author is the Cēra prince, who became a Jaina ascetic, by name Ilangōvadigal.

The story is associated with the attempt to sell the anklet or śilambu in Madurai, the capital of the Pāṇḍya Kingdom and the consequent tragedy, and hence the work is called the 'epic of the anklet' or Śilambu.

In this work, Kovalan and Kaṇṇagi meet the female Jaina ascetic Kavundhi¹⁷ who accompanied the couple to Madurai in order that she might have the opportunity of meeting the great Jaina acaryas in the Pāṇḍya Capital of Madurai¹⁸.

In Canto XV, Kavundi refers to the residence of the Caranars or Jaina divinities at Puhār provided by the Śravakas or Jaina householders¹⁹. From Canto XVI line 18 it is inferred that Kovalan was a Jaina householder and

¹⁶ Śilappadikāram, text and Adiyarkku-Nallar's commentary-Ed.V.Swaminatha Aiyar, Madras, 1892.

¹⁷ Śilappadikāram, Canto X, lines 36-37.
See Appendix 18.

¹⁸ Śilappadikāram, Canto X, Lines 56-59.
See Appendix 19.

¹⁹ Śilappadikāram, Canto XV, Lines 151-155.
See Appendix 20.

Adiyarkkunallar interprets this passage in the light of the Jain custom of not eating after nightfall. In Canto XXVII it is said how Kavundi Adigal, coming to know of the death of Kovalan and Kannagi felt sorry and took a vow to die of starvation²⁰. This practice of committing suicide by starvation is very common amongst the Jain ascetics and this practice is called 'Śallēkhanā'²¹.

The fact that Kovalan and Kannagi followed certain Jain practices is known from Cantos XV and XVI.

Ahimsa or Non-Killing is stressed in this work²². Yet another instance of Jain influence is the mention of Aiyai²³ found in the epic Śilappadikāram. Aije in Jain religion is equivalent to Koṛṛavai called as Ambā (Tamil Amman).

The work should have been produced sometime in the 5th century A.D. when the hold of Jainism was at its height in the Tamil Country²⁴. Many Jain Pallis flourished in Pukār, Madurai²⁵ and Uraiyr²⁶.

²⁰ Śilappadikaram, Canto XXVII, Lines 79-83.
See Appendix 21.

²¹ V.R.R. Dikshitar, Silappadikaram, P.308, Foot Note 1.

²² See Appendix 22.

²³ Śilappadikaram: 10-99, 246; 11-151; 216; 12-1-4; 12-5-1; 14-16; 16-12.

²⁴ K.K.Pillai, A Social History of the Tamils, Vol.I, 2nd Edition, Madras 1975, P.149.

²⁵ Śilappadikaram 5: 180 and 14:11-12

²⁶ Śilappadikaram, Canto XI, Lines 4-5.
See Appendix 23.

5.1.2.3 JĪVAKACINTĀMANI²⁷

This work, the greatest of the five mahakavyas, is undoubtedly the great existing Tamil Literary Monument. This great romantic epic is composed by Tiruttakkadeva²⁸. It is in 13 Cantos called Ilambakams and contains 3145 stanzas. It is based on the Sanskrit Jaina work called Mahāpurāṇam and was probably composed at the end of the 9th century A.D. or the beginning of the 10th century A.D. It is rich in poetic sentiments and beautiful diction and is one of the great classics of the Tamil literature.

The youthful poet together with his master migrated to Madurai, the great capital of the Pāṇḍya Kingdom and a centre of religious activities. With the permission of the teacher the young ascetic poet got introduced to the members of the Tamil Academy or Śāṅgam at Madurai. As a result of the challenge from his friendly poet of Madurai Śāṅgam, the Cintamani was composed by Tiruttakkadeva to prove that a Jaina author also could produce a work containing 'Śrīṅgara-rasa' and the classic deals with the puranic story of Jivaka.

Jīvaka Cintāmaṇi in one instance showed that it is a Jaina work. The Principle of non-killing is underscored in stanza 3107²⁹.

²⁷. Jīvakacintāmaṇi, Text and Commentary - Ed.by V.Swaminatha Iyer, Madras, 1887.

²⁸. M.S.Ramaswami Ayyangar, Op.Cit., PP.95-96.

²⁹. See Appendix 24.

5.1.3 JAIN WORKS ON PROSODY AND GRAMMAR

Yāpparungalakkārikai³⁰ is a treatise on Tamil prosody in Kaṭṭalai-K-Kalittuṟai metre by Amṛita Sākarar (Amita Sakarar) of 11th Century³¹ Yapparungalakkarikai comprises of only 44 verses.

Agapporulvilakkam is the work of Nār̥kavirāja Nambi. He was given the title of Nār̥kavirāya. He was a native of Puḷiyaṅguḍi on the banks of the river Poruṇai in Pāṇḍimandalam. It is an exposition of the Psychological emotion of love and allied experiences.

5.1.4 JAINAS CONTRIBUTION TO LEXICOGRAPHY

The contribution of Jainas to the Tamil lexicography is also worthy of note. There are three important works on Tamil lexicography: the three 'nighantus' are the 'Divākara-nighaṇṭu', 'Pingala-nighaṇṭu' and the 'Cuḍāmaṇi-nighaṇṭu'. The first is by Divākara-Muni, the second is by Pingala-muni, son of Divākara-Muni and the third by Maṇḍalapurusa. Tamil scholars are of the opinion that all the three were Jainas.

The first Divākara-nighaṇṭu, is probably lost to the world, but the other two are available. Of these the last is the most popular.

³⁰. Yāpparungalakkārikai with Kumaraswami Pulavar's commentary Ed.Ambalavana Pillai, 1938.

³¹. Also See Appendix 25.

The cursory view of Tamil literature reveals the influence of Jaina thought and philosophy since the Śāṅgam age.

5.2 JAINISM IN ART

A survey of Jaina antiquities in the Pāṇḍya kingdom reveal the vestiges of Jainism in art. The Jaina centres of art flourished far and wide of the Pāṇḍya kingdom. These centres of art are found largely on the rocks and natural caverns where large number of Sculptures were carved. From these historical relics of art, vestiges of Jainism is seen in abundance.

The Pāṇḍya region abounds in Jaina edifices of religious and aesthetic importance. Interesting series of natural caverns with stone beds inhabited by ascetics of the Jaina persuasion, relief sculptures depicting the Tīrthaṅkaras on the overhanging rock of the caverns or on nearby boulders and structural temples are found in almost every part of the Pāṇḍya kingdom.

5.2.1 SCULPTURES

The sculptures may be a series of figures of small and almost uniform size arranged in long rows one above the other, or it may be a group of figures of slightly bigger size carved in separate niches either as a single piece or in groups of two and they may possess the three fold parasol and the lotus seat; or they may be individual figures furnished with the characteristic details of the deities represented by them and as are depicted in the exuberance of artistic environments.

Images and Sculptures containing figures of the five supreme ones (Pañcha-Paramēshthīns) can be seen in Jaina temples. They are invariably in the shape of Chakras standing on Padmāsanas³².

The Chakra is supported by a crouching lion and two rearing yalis in turn standing on a Padmasana attached to a rectangular bhadrāsana.

Within the Chakra is placed an eight-petalled lotus (aṣṭadalapadma), each petal bearing a seated figure or some article. The figures are those of the five supreme ones (arhat, Siddha, āchārya, upādhyāya and Sādhu) while the articles are a dharmachakra or the wheel of the law, a wooden rest supporting the Jaina scripture called 'Sruta or Sruta-Jñāna and a temple (Jina-ālaya). In the centre of the lotus where one would expect the seed-vessel of the lotus, is the seated figure of the Tirthankara in all his glory, attended by Chamaras, triple-parasol, halo and the like. This Chakra is symbolical of the worship of Navadēvatas or the "nine deities", they being the five Pañchaparamēshthīns and dharmachakra, Sruta, Chaitya and Chaityālaya. The Pañchapurameshthins occupy the centre and the four cardinal points of the lotus while the latter four go in the petals alternately in the following order; preceding clockwise dharmachakra first, then Sruta, then Chaitya (an idol) and lastly chaityālaya or temple.

Images of the 24 Tīrthaṅkaras of the present age are usually placed on highly sculptured āsanas, generally Padmāsanas. Tīrthaṅkara images are

³² Indian Antiquary, Vol. XXXII, Pp.459-64.

found only in two attitudes, sitting and standing. There, however, appears to be a marked preference for the former attitude. Twenty-one Tīrthaṅkaras are said to have attained nirvāṇa in the Kāyotsarga attitude, i.e., standing erect, while the other three did so while sitting on a Padmāsana. These three are Rṣhabhadeva, Nēminātha and Mahavira, who are considered to be the important of all. The attitude in which they attained nirvāṇa was thus specially emphasised and came later to be sometimes associated with all the twenty-four.

The seated images of Tīrthaṅkaras always have the legs crossed in front, the toes of one foot resting close upon the knee of the other, and the right hand placed on the left in the lap, both the palms facing upwards. All are so alike when thus represented that the need appears to have been felt to differentiate them by certain devices which are known as Chinnas or Lañchhanas. These emblems are usually carved on the pedestals or asanas on which the images are installed (Refer Appendix 27).

In the case of Pārśvanātha, Snake-hoods numbering seven are shown over his head and sometimes a snake with a single hood or without hood on the pedestal. This is to distinguish him from Śupārśvanātha, the seventh Tīrthaṅkara, who has also Snake-hoods over his head, though the number of the hoods rarely exceeds five.

To avoid even the slightest confusion the Svastika symbol has been prescribed for Suparsvanatha, which is scrupulously engraved in all images of this Tīrthaṅkara.

Digambara images are all nude while those of the Svetambaras, are dressed and sometimes decorated with crowns and ornaments. They have a triple umbrella called "Mukkudai" in Tamil over their heads which is surrounded by a Bhamandala or halo. At the base of the asanas are sometimes found nine figures representing the nine planets (navgrahas). On the front of the asanas are usually carved two small figures. To the right of the Tīrthaṅkara stands a male figure representing the Yaksha or male attendant deva of that particular Tīrthaṅkara; to his left stands the corresponding female figure representing the particular Yakshini or female attendant devi of that particular Tīrthaṅkara.

Sometimes between these attendants is a small panel in which the figure of a devi called Vidyadevi is often shown. Eight auspicious marks called ashta-mangalas, viz., Parasol, flag, fly-whisk, Svastika, mirror, vase (kalasa), powder-flask and a throne seat, are sometimes shown on the asanas.

5.2.1.1 CAUMUKHI

It is known also as Sarvatobhadra - Pratima ie., auspicious from all sides. It represents the figure of a Tīrthaṅkara from all the four sides.

5.2.1.2. ADINATHA OR RSHABHANATHA³³

The Jaina puranas and ritualistic texts do not yield much in describing specially the images of the Tīrthaṅkaras.

³³ In the Jaina history of the patriarchs, Rshabhanatha or Vrsabhanatha is regarded as the founder of the religion.

The same may be said of the Jaina Silpa Sastras which seem to be very laconic in this respect.

From the categorical list of the Lañchanas or emblems of the Jinas given in the Pravacanasaroddhara, the first Tīrthaṅkara's cognizance is known which is a Bull³⁴. Dharmacakra is also associated with him. The tree³⁵ connected with the first Jina is Nyagrodha or the Indian Banyan tree. Yaksa related to him is Gomukha (Bull-faced) and Yakhsini Cakrēśvari³⁶ (goddess of wheels) or Apraticakra. Bharata and Bāhubali are the worshippers on either side of Rshabhadeva (Refer Appendix 27).

5.2.1.3 AJITANĀTHA SUPTAPARNA

The Jaina symbol of Ajitanātha is elephant (gaja) and his other symbol, namely his special tree (Kevalavrksa) both being connected with his images. His Yaksa is Mahayakṣa and his Yaksini is Ajitabala. His posture is Khadgasana (standing with two arms hanging on the sides). His Chauri-bearer is Sagaracakri.

³⁴ The explanation of his bull symbol is clear from the origin of his name. His mother like the mothers of all the Tīrthaṅkaras saw certain dreams and the first dream was about a bull. Hence, the name of the Jina as Vrsabhanatha or Rshabanatha and the symbol of bull as invariably connected with his representation. The symbol of his Yaksa Gomukha having a bull's face has a definite connection with the same origin.

³⁵ The patriarchs have certain special trees under which they received the Kevala Jñana or perfect knowledge.

³⁶ Cakresvari, the Yakhsini of the Jina looks like the Vaisnavi, the wife of Brahmanic Vishnu.

5.2.1.4 PĀRŚVANĀTHA

He is one of the greatest Tīrthaṅkaras or prophets of Jainism. Some, with a scrupulously historical eye, regard him as the true founder of the Jaina faith. His emblem or cognizance is a snake. Snake apart being present in the usual place of the symbol, snakes canopy him with three or seven or eleven hoods.

His Yaksa is called Parsva³⁷ or Vamana or Dharanendra and Yakhsini is called Padmāvati. The king, who stands by his side as a Chauri-bearer is known as Ajitaraja. The Devadāru or Dhataki is his Kevala Tree.

Pārśva's Yaksa carries a snake. The Yakhsini, also has the Cobra as her vehicle.

5.2.1.5 MAHAVIRA

His emblem is lion. His Yaksa spirits are respectively known as Mātāṅga and Siddhāyikā. The Magadhan king Śreṇika or better known as Bimbisāra acts as his Chauri-bearer. His Kevala tree is called Sāla (Latin: Shorea Robusta).

³⁷ Parsva Yaksha is the Yaksha who attends on Parsvanatha, the twenty-third and most popular of all the Jinas.

Parsva Yaksha is more commonly known and depicted as the serpent king Dharanendra (king of Magic spells), and his consort Padmāvati is perhaps the most important focus of worship and devotion in the Jain tradition apart from the Jinas themselves. John E.Cort, "Absences and Transformation", MARG, Vol.XLVII, No.2, 1995.

His symbol of the lion is the most befitting mark of his spiritual heroism. His forbearance, his austentics, his strenuous work in the path of destroying work are all unmistakable proofs of his lion-like personality.

The introduction of Yaksī, Yakṣa etc. in Jaina iconography as attendant deities slowly paved the way for the preponderance of worship of these deities as against the worship of the main Tīrthaṅkaras.

5.2.2 CAVES AND CAVERNS

The earliest extant religious monuments in Tamilnadu are the natural caverns, which once served as the resorts of Jaina monks, found in some of the hills in Tirunelveli, Ramnad, Madurai, Pudukkōttai, and Kanyakumari Districts.

Such abodes numbering to more than one hundred have been brought to light so far, thanks to the assiduous efforts of the Archaeologists over the last five decades. These caves which are found amidst picturesque surroundings had been resorted to by mendicants who resolved to spend their lives in splendid isolation engaging themselves in contemplation and religious pursuits.

The early Jaina caves are important for several reasons. They represent the earliest lithic monuments in this region; the caves generally contain the earliest epigraphic records in brāhmi characters palaeographically assigned to a period from 2nd century B.C. to 3rd or 4th Century A.D. and above all, they provide authentic evidence of the early spread of Jainism in the Pāṇḍya kingdom.

5.2.2.1 SALIENT FEATURES OF THE CAVES

The salient features of the early resorts of the wind-clad recluses may be summarised as follows:

The natural caverns were made suitable for habitation by cutting stone beds in them. The beds were chiselled smooth with one side raised a little to serve as pillows.

The overhanging rock was cut in the form of a drip-ledge so as to prevent rain water flowing into the cave shelters. Sometimes, the caverns were provided with structural additions in front, in the form of thatched roofs supported by wooden poles. This is evident from a number of holes cut into the open rock surface in front of the caves. It deserves special mention that these "holy residences" were mostly located near springs of water which catered to the basic needs of the ascetics. Also they are characterised by the presence of brāhmi inscriptions chiselled.

The concern of Jaina art has always been the directing of men to union with the Great Beings that it reveals in tangible form. To that end no skill, nor time, nor patience could ever be too much. The works of art were guide posts to lead men by slow apprehension or sudden intuition to find the treasure hid in the shrine of their own hearts.

In the Pāṇḍya country the earliest Jaina monuments are those which consist of dressed beds with raised pillow-like mouldings or merely dressed surface on the ground under an overhanging rock in the numerous natural

caves and caverns in the inaccessible areas, mostly in the southern districts. These beds and some of the brows of the caves contain Brāhmi inscriptions in Tamil language³⁸.

5.2.3 VESTIGES

Vestiges of Jainism in the Pāṇḍya kingdom could be seen in the following important Jaina centres. The caves and caverns with beds and the sculptures depicted in each Jaina vestige are detailed with appropriate textual corroboration.

5.2.3.1 ĀNAIMALAI

Ānaimalai is a village about five miles from Madurai and is considered to be one of the sacred Jaina hills in Tamilnadu by the Digambara sect. The beds called 'Panchapandavar Padukkai' is found at an almost inaccessible natural cave³⁹ (Refer Plates).

³⁸ I. Mahadevan, *Corpus of Tamil Brāhmi Inscriptions*, Seminar on Inscriptions, Madras, 1966.

³⁹ The researcher is of the view that the Jaina ascetics should have been well-bodied Sadhus with a good physique and stamina. The steps are too steep and the natural cave is at an inaccessible height. Any wrongful step may be fatal.

The inaccessibility, should have provided the Sadhus with 'holy residences' which are free from disturbances and a quiet atmosphere to enable these recluses to have a pensive mood. Interestingly, the Scholar could not climb Ānaimalai in a single attempt.

Not far from the top of the rock at Ānaimalai⁴⁰ is a cavern so naturally formed to afford shelter from sun and rain. It measures roughly 22' in length and 18' in breadth, while at the entrance its height is 3', but this diminished as one goes interior. The cavern contains 3 double beds and one single bed which is slightly lower than the other and four other contiguous beds covered with earth⁴¹.

Eight other beds are found outside the cavern. The dimensions of the beds roughly vary from about 6' to 7' in length and 1¼' to 2' in breadth. All are chiselled smooth with pillow lofts. Above the cave entrance, the overhanging rock is cut to a depth of 2' 3" in breadth and 15' in length. Below this drip-line cutting is a solitary brahmi inscription datable to the first two centuries of the Christian era. It records that the stone beds found in the Palli were the gift of one Nathan of Kunrattur and these were made for the merit of the monks Eri Aritan, Attuvay and Aratta Kayipan⁴².

Though early Jaina vestiges in the form of stone beds and Brāhmī inscription are found here, Ānaimalai attained its height of glory mainly in the 9th century A.D. A number of stone sculptures representing Tīrthaṅkaras,

⁴⁰ Ānaimalai or the elephant hill, is six miles east of Madurai and is "the most striking mass of perfectly naked solid rock".

It is about two miles long, a quarter of a mile wide and 250 feet height. It bears a fair resemblance to an elephant lying down. - Madurai District Gazetteer, 1906, p.254.

⁴¹ Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy, 1907, Pp.46-52.

⁴² ARE 457/1906;

Also V.R.Ramachandra Dikshitar "Lithic Monuments in early South India" , JIH, Vol.28, Pg.80.

Yaksas and Yakhsis were carved on the vertical surface of a rock nearby the cavern in the 9th century A.D. Some of them were made by lay devotees like Enadinadi, Saradan Ariyan of Venpurainadu, Koyyan..... of the village Mallattirukkai and Eviyampudi of Vettanjeri. These images were to be protected by the Karanattar (accountants) of the village porkodu and the revenue officials of Venbaikudi⁴³.

Yet another sacred image was caused to be cut by the reputed preceptor Ajjanandi and the Sabha (village assembly) of Narasingamangalam agreed to maintain and protect the image⁴⁴.

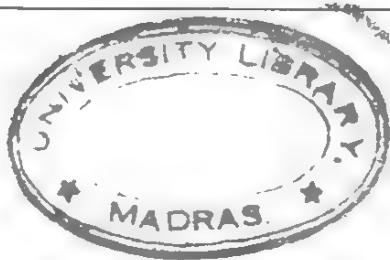
An exquisite sculpture of a Yaksa next to the Tīrthāṅkara was made by a certain Cheduliyapandi of the village Peruvembarrur⁴⁵. Thus pious devotees from several villages had contributed their mite in different ways to the Jaina establishments at Ānaimalai particularly in the 9th Century A.D.

The Madura Sthalapurana say that Ānaimalai (elephant hill) is a petrified elephant. The Jains of Conjeevaram, says this chronicle, tried to convert the Śaivite people of Madura to the Jain faith. Finding the task difficult, they had recourse to magic. They dug a great pit ten miles long, performed a sacrifice thereon, and thus caused a huge elephant to arise from it. This beast they sent against Madura. It advanced towards the town,

⁴³ ARE, 67-74 / 1905.

⁴⁴ SII, XIV, No.102.

⁴⁵ SII, Vol. XIV, No.103.



shaking the whole earth at every step, with the Jains marching close behind it. But the Pāṇḍya king invoked the aid of Śiva, and the God arose and slew the elephant with his arrow at the spot where it now lies petrified.

5.2.3.2 ALAGARMALAI

It is situated about twelve miles North-West of Madurai. The stone beds are many and of varying sizes scattered single and in groups over the whole surface of the cavern which is a spacious hall fifty yards broad. The biggest measures 8' 7" by 3' 1" while the smallest is 6' 4" by 2' ¼". Neither are they cut deep into the rock nor are the pillow lofts appreciably raised⁴⁶. Stone beds are also reported to exist even below the surface of the spring⁴⁷. Holes for wooden posts by the side of the narrow steps are similar to the Tirupparankunram cave. Bigger pits in the rock are believed to have been mortars used by resident mendicants for pounding their food grains.

The Brahmi records bring to light names of persons who carved stone beds for the comfortable stay of the monks. Kaninakan and Kaniynantan who were the sons of one Iravi-i, Atan - a gold merchant of Madurai, Elacantan - an iron monger, Elava Atan - a cloth merchant of Venpalli, Kalumaran and Tiyncantan were important among them. Besides, the names of a nun Sapamita, and a monk, Kasyapan, also find place in the scriptal vestiges of the cave⁴⁸. The unflinching patronage extended by the merchant community to the Jaina institution at Alagarmalai is apparent from these label inscriptions.

⁴⁶ Q.J.M.S., Vol.27, Pp.123-124.

⁴⁷ Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy, 1909, Pp.68-69.

⁴⁸ I.Mahadevan, Op.Cit., Alagarmalai, Nos. 1-13.

A little below the cave containing the stone beds is a huge boulder with a beautiful image of Tīrthaṅkara.

5.2.3.3 MANGULAM

It is a village near Arittapatti in Madurai and is adjacent to a range of hills locally known as Kalugumalai.

Atop the steep ascent of rocky slopes are five caverns with rock cut beds and Brahmi inscriptions. Four of these caverns are inscribed upon, while three of them have smoothly chiselled beds cut on the bottom rocks. The beds are generally found to run in different directions and are slightly bigger than those at Ānaimalai.

Unlike other caverns, this possesses an unsheltered, sandy courtyard, hence no beds are found here. The southern part of the cavern extends to a depth of 49' 5" between two boulders serving as walls. The curvaceous cavern is 58' in length and its height is roughly 1½' at the opening. On a platform are nearly thirtyone beds situated both inside and outside.

In the last cavern is a centrally cut out bed on a higher level measuring 7' 8" by 5', which was probably meant for the chief among the Śramanas.

The cluster of caverns which formed the monastic establishment at Māngulam was presided over by a reputed monk called Kaninanta. Several stone beds were caused to be made in these caves by Kadalānvaluti, an officer of the Pāṇḍya king Nedunjeliyan, Chatikan and Ilanchatikan, brother-in-law

and nephew of the same king. Besides, the members of the merchant guild of Tiruvellarai also had evinced keen interest in this monastery and a lattice work to the abode of Kaniñanta was provided by them.

5.2.3.4 KONGAR - PULIYANGULAM

Kongar-Puliyangulam is nine and half miles south-west on Madurai in the Tirumangalam road and is situated on the borders of Madurai Taluk⁴⁹. Six caverns are found here in a narrow cleft of the bald rock⁵⁰.

The cavern had been provided with structural additions by the laity even in the 2nd century B.C. The caverns have beds numbering more than thirty. The average size of the beds vary from 8' x 1' 6" in the longest to 5' 7" x 1' 6" in the shortest.

A nearby rock has a bold relief sculpture of a Tirthankara shown seated on Padmasana. The figures bears stylistic features of the 9th Century A.D. Besides, an inscription incised below the image, palaeographically assigned to the same century, records that it was caused to be made at the instance of the revered Jaina teacher Ajjanandi⁵¹.

To protect the image from rain water flowing over it a groove is chiselled above the head of the image in the form of a Prabha.

⁴⁹ T.V.Mahalingam, Early South Indian Palaeography, P.224.

⁵⁰ P.B.Desai, Jainism in South India, P.58;
Also Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy, 1910, P.66.

⁵¹ ARE 54/1910.

5.2.3.5 TIRUPPARANKUNRAM

This place near Madurai is important to the Jains who consider it as one of the eight hills sacred to them.

The cavern is situated at an inconvenient place on the steep western side of the hill near the present Tirupparankunram railway station and the village Cāvadi, and it can be reached by ascending the crude foot-holds cut into the rock.

It measures 56 feet in length north to south, 20 feet in depth and 5 feet 10 inches in height in the centre, and can afford shelter to a large number of people from Sun, Wind and the brow of the hill is cut to a small depth to prevent rain water from getting into the cavern. In front of the vault are bored some holes evidently meant for fixing poles and rails. Not far off is a spring of cool water.

Within the cavern there are six beds. The one peculiar feature of this cavern is that it has two low benches measuring 5 feet by 1 foot 9½ inches and the other 6 feet by 3 feet⁵².

In another part of the same hill, ie., on its northern side, there is another small cave with two beds, but without any inscription.

⁵² Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy, 1909, Pp.67-68.

The Pañchapāṇḍava beds (Padukkai) on the western slope of the Tirupparankunram hill are situated at an inconvenient height, up the steep side of the hill and are reached only by crude foot-holds cut into the rock and no human being except the curious antiquarian would ever think of getting up to have a view of the beds.

The so-called Pañchapāṇḍava beds within the cavern are six in number though, strangely enough, the Pāṇḍavas were only five. Of these beds four are small ones, roughly equal in size and two, slightly bigger. The latter lie spread east to west and are mutilated on their pillow sides. The four smaller ones are cut one by the side of the other and are separated only by a very thin band of stone. They are too narrow for a human being even of medium size to stretch himself freely.

5.2.3.6 SIDDHARMALAI

Siddharmalai (Sages hill) is a hill near Mēttupatti, not far from the perandai Dam in the Nilakkottai Taluk of the Madurai District. It is about a mile north of Mettupatti.

The situation of the cavern, on the top of the hill lying close to the bank of the river Vaigai which winds its course here to the dam is most picturesque⁵³.

⁵³ T.V.Mahalingam, Early South Indian Palaeography, University of Madras, 1979, P.258.

There is a spacious cavern in the Southern slope of the hill and measures no less than 297 feet in length and 6 feet 8 inches in height⁵⁴.

There is a Chamber in which two rows of five stone beds, each with a pillow loft, have been cut.

5.2.3.7. MUTTUPATTI

It is situated about ten miles from Madurai on the Madurai-Tirumangalam road and has a range of hills known as the Ummanā malai which runs parallel to the road on the left side⁵⁵.

The last of the hills near the hamlet has a cavern measuring forty-three feet east to west, twenty-six feet deep (on the eastern side) and about five feet high. It contains a large number of beds, not less than thirty.

Another detached boulder in the same locality contains a bed. In addition there are two Jaina images cut just above the brow of the cavern.

One image represents an ascetic in the Siddhāsana posture below an arch of ornamental scroll work which is supported on either side by lions standing on their hind legs on a level with the shoulders of the image and on either side of it are two Chauribearers⁵⁶.

⁵⁴ Annual report on Indian Epigraphy, 1908, Pp.46-47; Also Madura Gazetteer, Vol.1, P.294.

⁵⁵ P.B.Desai, Jainism in South India, 1957, P.57.

⁵⁶ Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy, 1910, Pg.67.

The contact that existed between the Jainas of Ceylon and Tamilnadu in early historical times is proved by an inscription found here which mentions that the cavern was inhabited by Caiyalan of Vintaiyur. The name Caiyalan, denotes a person from Ceylon⁵⁷.

Thus it is learnt that Muttuppatti continued to be an important Jaina vestige from the early centuries of the Christian era.

5.2.3.8 ARITṬĀPATṬI

Aritṭāpatṭi is a village situated midway between Melūr⁵⁸ and the Alagarmalai hills in the Madurai District. Not far away from the village is Māṅgulaṁ where there is a range of hills called Kaliñjamalai or Ūvamalai.

The ascent is through the rocky slopes of the hill, which are very steep. On the eastern slope of the hill there are five caverns with the usual beds and Brāhmi inscriptions. Of the four caverns discovered in the Kalugumalai hill (in Madurai) three contain smoothly chiselled beds cut on the bottom rocks. In some, the beds are quite numerous and run in different directions. All the four bear Brāhmi inscriptions⁵⁹.

⁵⁷ I.Mahadevan, Corpus of Tamil-Brahmi Inscription, Muttuppatti, Nos.1-3.

⁵⁸ Arittapatti is five miles away from Melur.

⁵⁹ K.V.Subrahmanya Ayyar, Proceedings and Transactions of the Third All India Oriental Conference, 1924, P.276.

In front of the rock is a spacious courtyard without any bed and without the least sheltering place as in the case of all other caverns.

The floor of the cavern is sandy and hence no beds are found in it. The Southern part of the cavern extends to a depth of 49 feet 5 inches between two boulders that serve as walls. The entire length of the cavern which is in the shape of a curve is 58 feet and the height at the opening is roughly 1½ feet. There are as many as 31 beds both inside and outside on a protecting platform⁶⁰.

One of the beds in front of the last cavern measures 7 feet 8 inches by 5 feet and is on a higher level than the others and occupies a central position.

Ariṭṭāpaṭṭi continued to be a flourishing Jaina Centre even in the 9th Century A.D. as is attested to by an image of a seated Tīrthaṅkara, canopied by a triple umbrella over his head, carved on a boulder. The image was sculptured at the instance of the renowned preceptor Ajjanandi on behalf of the accountants of Nerkodu. The people of a village known as Vaniyakkudi agreed to protect the image. The hill at Ariṭṭāpaṭṭi was by then called Tiruppinaianmalai.

5.2.3.9 KARUNGĀLAKKUDI

This village lies about eight miles to the north of Mēlur in the Madura District on the road to Tiruchirapaḷli.

⁶⁰ Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy, 1907, Pg.47.

The interesting inference noted from the inscriptions here is that the beds in the natural caverns were used not only by the Jaina saints, but also by laymen about twelve hundred years ago. (Refer Plates)

One of the caverns is formed by a boulder resting on and overhanging another. While the cavern containing the Brāhmi inscription measures 33' east to west as well as north to south opening both on the southern and northern sides; the other caverns have mutilated beds cut into the rocky floor. Higher up the hill are three more natural caverns with rows of beds cut into the floor⁶¹.

The occurrence of a series of stone beds at Karungālakkuḍi would reveal that large number of monks inhabited the caverns. Since the same place continued to enjoy religious importance in later times, the great Acarya Ajjanandi caused to be made an image of a Tīrthaṅkara on a boulder in the 9th Century A.D.⁶² In fact, most of the early monasteries around Madurai had been provided with sculptural embellishments in the 9th and 10th Centuries A.D.

5.2.3.10 UTTAMAPĀLAYAM

Uttampālayam is in the Periyakulam Taluk of Madurai. In Uttampālayam, there is a small rock out-crop called Karuppannaśvāmi rock here occurring outside the village has Jaina carvings and inscriptional evidences⁶³.

⁶¹ Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy, 1912, Pg.50.

⁶² ARE 562/1911.

⁶³ Madurai District Gazetteer, P.321 f;
Also P.B.Desai, Jainism in South India, 1957, P.57.

The carvings represent Mahāvīra, Pārśvanātha and some religious teachers with their names. (Refer Plates)

5.2.3.11 NĀGAMALAI⁶⁴

Nagamalai has carvings, in a row, of seated Jaina, standing Pārśvanātha, Padmāvatī and those of some pontiffs. The carvings reflect a high degree of artistic skill and uniformity of style with other similar carvings from Kaḷugumalai, Chitarāl etc., and are of the ninth and tenth centuries A.D. Inscribed records occur from several of these⁶⁵.

5.2.3.12 KARADIPATTI

This group of carvings is on the interface of a hemispherical cavity caused by an exfoliation and fall of the rock on the slopes of the hill here and has Yakshī Ambika on her lion mount, almost similar to that of Chitarāl and Mātāṅga at the other end, with Mahāvīra and Pārśvanātha in between.

Outside, on the brow of the scarp is another and larger figure of Mahāvīra which has been carefully carved with Pitha, Chaurī-bearers, hovering gandharvas, and with the scroll work with foliage above the triple umbrella not yet deeply relieved and somewhat incomplete. Inscribed records in Vatteluttu occur under all the carvings referring to their context and character.

⁶⁴ Samanar Malai (in Madurai) lies south of the Nāgamalai hills.

⁶⁵ It was a pity that constant quarrying by contractors had damaged the hills bearing a large portion of the relics of Jain monks.

On October 13, 1996 a landslide took place in "Samanarmalai" and many inscriptions are feared to have been destroyed.

"The Hindu" dated October 14, 1996.

5.3.2.13 VARICCIYUR

Varicciyur⁶⁶ is situated to the east of Vilattur, which is eight miles east of Madurai. Near this village is a hill consisting of three big rocks, which is said to belong to the village Kunnattur. The eastern most rock is Udayagiri and it contains a huge spacious cavern formed by the projection of the two sides of the rock. A number of beds have been cut into it, but are considerably mutilated. On the overhanging rock at a height of 30 feet from the cavern is engraved with a Brāhmi inscription, which is much obliterated and appear to mention the cutting of stone beds in the cavern⁶⁷.

5.2.3.14 VIKKIRAMANGALAM

Vikkiramangalam is a village near Solavandan. About a mile away is the Nagamalai range of hills wherein is a natural cavern facing south. The height of this cavern is not much except its entrance. The floor is rugged and sloping inwards. Narrow stone beds had been cut into the rock on the floor with low depression in two rows of four and eight respectively close to the uneven rocky walls on either side. In some cases a few beds have been partitioned off from each other by their ridges running the whole length of the beds. No pillow lofts are present, but on the pillow side are three Brāhmi inscriptions. They contain names of persons such as Antaipikan, Kuviran and Cenkuviran who in all probability were instrumental in carving out the stone

⁶⁶ Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy, 1908, Pp 46-47.

⁶⁷ ARE, 38-A, B, C / 1908.

beds in the cavern. Of the three, Kuviran was a native of the village Petalai which remains unidentified⁶⁸. Cenkuviran appears to be a member of the family of Kuviran. The stone beds found at Vikkiramangalam are locally known as undankal.

5.2.3.15 KILAVALAVU

Kilavalavu is about six miles from Mēlur. Here close to a cavern with early Tamil Brahmi record and smooth beds on the rock floor are found a series of Mahāvīra and Pārśvanātha figures, complete with pitha and other details of attendants, makara architecture for the seat-back etc. It also carries vestiges of a fine painted pilaster over and around them showing floral and figural details in them, in green and ochre colours.

This is due to the boulder being chiselled all round wherever the slopes run into the concave portions of the rock and shelters below it a number of beds, the pillow lofts of which converge to the base of the boulder and thereby give to the latter the appearance of petals spreading evenly from the stem of a lotus flower.

Similar boulders with numerous beds arranged in a circle round their narrow bases also exist in an adjoining hill and the openings all round are protected by pieces of piled up stone. The concentration of beds may probably indicate a heavy congregation of ascetics within a small radius.

⁶⁸ ARE, 621-623 / 1926.

5.2.3.16 TIRUMŪRTIMALAI

There are several Jaina sculptures at this place located at the foot of the Ānaimalai hills. These consists of a Tīrthaṅkara flanked by two attendants. An inscription near these carvings itself refer to one Eṭṭulappa Nāyaka (in 1793 A.D.) according to which an agreement was made for granting 4 gold pieces as marriage tax for the 'Amanēśvara' temple here, from the head of Amanasamudram village and to prevent the transfer of the ownership of this land at any time.

5.2.3.17 CHITHARĀL (TIRUCCHARANATTUMALAI)

By the side of the over-hanging rock forming a natural cave, are found sculptured figures of Tīrthaṅkaras, which are votive images carved by visitors to this holy shrine here from distant places in the past. The figures are those of Parśvanātha, Mahavira and other Tīrthaṅkaras and of Padmāvati devi. The place seems to have been sufficiently famous in the past to have attracted Jains from such distant places as Tirunarungondai in Tirukkoilur taluk of South Arcot District, Kudavasal in Thanjavur district etc. Archaic Vatteluttu records below the figures on the seat refer to Ajjanandi, Uttanandi of Kattampalli at Tirunedumbarai, Paṭṭinibhaṭāriar of Tiruchcharanam and Viranandi Adigal of Melaipalli at Tirunarungondai.

This earlier rock cut reliefs had been supplemented by a regular shrine in the medieval times of a simple nature, along with a gopura entrance for the precincts suggesting the development of architectural forms coeval with those for Hindu temples in the region.

5.2.3.18 KALUGUMALAI

Kalugumalai is in the Kovilpatti taluk of the Tirunelveli district. Here the Jaina sculptures lie at a higher attitude of 150 feet and are carved in relief on the smooth surfaces of the overhanging rock. The richness of imagery, the wealth of details and refinement of execution exhibited in them are really admirable. This imperishable gallery of art created by the superior intellect of man on the strength of nature's bounty will ever stand as a unique monument of Jaina culture in Pāṇḍya kingdom.

In later times it has proved to be a centre of attraction for the devotee and the artist of both the Brahmanical and the Jaina faiths, who have immortalised their religious fervour by creating out of the hard rock images and temples of superb workmanship in honour of their deities. The idols and shrines of the Brahmanical Persuasion are known by the general name Vettuvān Kōvil⁶⁹. The Jaina Sculptures lie at a higher attitude and are carved in relief on the smooth surfaces of the overhanging rock. (Refer Plates).

These sculptures which number over a hundred in all may be analysed into three groups :-

1. The series of figures of small and almost uniform size are arranged in long rows one above the other. These depict the Jinas in general in the sitting postures on what appear like lotus thrones with the triple umbrellas overhead. They possess neither the distinctive emblems nor the attendants.

⁶⁹ ARE 1894/18-117.

2. Another group of figures is of Jinas of slightly bigger size carved in separate niches either as a single piece or in groups of two. These also own no other characteristic features excepting the three-fold parasol and the lotus seat.
3. Under the third category would come such individual figures as are furnished with the characteristic deals of the deities represented by them and as are depicted in the exuberance of artistic environments. Among these are the portraits of Mahāvīra and a few other Tīrthaṅkaras, the Yakshinīs, Bāhubali, etc.

Śri Bāhubali worship is popular and a number of sculptures depicting the Kayotsarga penance of Bāhubali are noticed at Kalugumalai. The sculpture at Kalugumalai is probably the oldest of these sculptures generally assigned to the 8th Century A.D.⁷⁰ It is simple and engraved without much decoration of the creepers and anthills and snakes.

YAKSHINĪS OF KALUGUMALAI

At a spot to the left of the three rows of miniature Jinas is a fairly big niche containing the following figures. The stately image of a female deity is standing in the middle adorned with crown and ear ornaments. She has two hands. Her right hand is placed lightly on the head of a female child which should not be mistaken for an attendant. In her left hand is a bunch of fruits

⁷⁰ A palaeographic examination of the records tends to give a view that they belong to the 8th Century A.D.

which might be taken to be mangoes. To her left is a lion standing close behind, with its huge raised head at the farther end facing the front and with the up-turned tail. Two male children are standing on her left side and before the lion. To the right of the deity is the standing figure, which is damaged, probably of a dancer in ecstatic pose. The deity of the above description must be Ambikā, the Yakshiṇī of Nēminātha Tīrthan̄kara. This identification rests on three main features that mark her out, viz., the lion which is her vehicle, the bunch of mangoes and the presence of children, which are her attributes. To the left of this niche is the shrine of Mahāvīra, and it is significant to observe that the former is more spacious and impressive than the latter.

To the right of the three rows of Jinas referred to above is a large niche dedicated to Mahāvīra. On the right side of this is another niche of smaller dimension containing the images of two Jinas sitting side by side. Below this is another niche of about the same size consecrated to a Yakshiṇī. She is sitting on a lotus seat with her folded right foot resting on it, the left foot is hanging down. Her head is encircled by the halo of serpent hood. She possesses four hands. In her raised upper right hand she is holding a snake; and an object which may be a fruit can be detected in the palm of her lower right hand which, being folded, is touching the shoulder. She seems to bear something like a goad in her upper left hand which is lifted. Her lower left hand with a noose is seen placed below on the lap. Two female attendants carrying fly-whisks are standing on her two sides.

Thus the rock-cut sculptures on the Kalugumalai hill present a glowing picture of the religious ardour and artistic excellence attained by the adherents of Jainism in the Pāṇḍya kingdom.

5.2.3.19 ERUVADI

Eruvadi, is in Nanguneri Taluk of Tirunelveli district. It lies 8 kms north of Vallioor.

It has a natural cavern on the Irattai-pottai rock. The cavern is 25 feet in length and 8 feet height. The overhanging boulder over the cavern bearing a series of Jaina bas reliefs accompanied by votive inscriptions.

5.2.3.20 MALAYADIKKURICHI

Malaiyadikkurichi is situated in Sankarankoil Taluk of Tirunelveli district.

In a finished cave with inscription of the seventeenth year of Maran Candan (who is the same king of the Vaigai bed inscription of Madurai, and was the father of Arikesari Maravarman, and was called Celiyan in some early records) is also found⁷¹ the niche figures on the back wall of the rock-cut hall and appear to have been completely obliterated by being deliberately chiselled off in a stage of conflict, and could have been for Jaina religion originally, and was converted into Brahmanical one subsequently⁷². The sanctum does not have rock cut feature of the original character that vitiates against this hypothesis, nor does the inscribed record itself have any direct import that the cave temple had been excavated for brahmanical gods but simply calls it the stone temple cut by a local chieftain in the seventeenth year of Maran Candan.

⁷¹ ARE 358/1960.

⁷² Jaina Art and Architecture, Bharatiya Jnanpith. Vol.II, P.208.

5.2.3.21 VĪRASIKHĀMAṆI

Vīrasikhāmaṇi is 8 miles South-West of Śankaranainārkōvil in the Tirunelveli district.

There are some rock-cut caves of considerable interest here, on a rock forming part of the tank bund of the village⁷³.

In a cave are figures which the natives call Pañcha Pāṇḍavas, probably Jaina.

Going up the hill from this cave (in the northern direction) a cavern facing the west is found. Here are 1) a row of five damaged beds (north to south), 2) four other beds (east to west), and 3) one bed in front of the second group of beds (north to south). The second bed of the second group contains 64 small squares cut into it and outside the cavern and in front of it are a number of holes bored into the rock. These holes might have been meant for the insertion of wooden pillars necessary for putting up temporary structures to keep off the sun and rain⁷⁴.

⁷³ Sewell, List of Antiquities, Vol.I, P.306.

⁷⁴ Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy, 1908, Pp.46-47.

5.2.3.22. MARUKALTALAI

It is a small village at a distance of 10 miles north east of Palayankottai in the Tirunelveli district and is situated on the Southern side of the river Tamraparani.

It is about the hill called Pūviludaiyārmalai, a small natural cave formed by two huge boulders, one overhanging the other. About 4 to 5 feet below the top, the overhanging rock appears to have been chiselled to a length of about 10 yards.

At the left corner of the bottom of the cave are seven beds, each of which must have been meant for one man either to lean on or lie down⁷⁵.

The cavern is 52' in length north to south and 8' deep. A drip ledge is cut on the overhanging rock so as to drain off rain water. The rock cut beds were here caused to be cut by Kasipan a member of the Velir clan who ruled Venadu which comprised South west region of Tirunelveli, Northern and North-western parts of Kanyakumari. These beds, being rock-cut, are referred to as Kalkañchanam in the inscription⁷⁶. 'Kalkañchanam' denotes rock-cut beds and pallis.

⁷⁵ Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy, 1907, Pg.46.

⁷⁶ ARE 407 / 1906;

Also K.V.Subramanya Ayyar, Proceedings of the Third All India Oriental Conference, 1920, P.288.

New Indian Antiquary, Vol.I, PP.364-365;

T.V.Mahalingam, Early South Indian Palaeography, 1976, PP.222-223;

I.Mahadevan, Corpus of the Tamil-Brahmi Inscriptions, Marukaltalai, No.1.

5.2.3.23 KUNNAKUDI

The village Kunrakkudi also commonly known as Kunnakkudi, is a small village in Tiruppattur taluk of Ramanathapuram district and lies at a distance of about five miles from Karaikkudi town. The place derives its name from the small hillock found amidst the village.

On the western side of the Murugan temple is a natural cavern with stone beds used by the Jaina mendicants in olden days.

The existence of a rock-cut well in it is a peculiarity. This water source takes the place of the natural springs of other caverns.

5.2.3.24 AYYAMPALAYAM

Aivarmalai at Ayyampalayam is nine miles from Palani and is 1402 feet above the sea-level⁷⁷.

Several caverns and Jaina carvings of the ninth-tenth century A.D. and very important inscriptions of the same period are found here. They deal with a Pārsvanātha sculpture and Yakhsis, got renovated here by one Santiviraguruva, disciple of Guṇavīraguruva (Refer Plates).

⁷⁷ Madurai District Gazetteer (ed. W.Francis) Pp.300-01; Also P.B.Desai, Jainism in South India, Pp.60-61.

On the north-east of a natural shelter of the hill, which is 160 feet long and 13 feet height, 16 images of Tīrthaṅkaras are found.

It is likely that this very Gunavīraguruva was the author of the famous Tamil work Neminātham.

Other inscriptions refer to the famous saints Ajjanandi, Indrasena, Mallisena Periyar, Pārśvabhaṭara, Perumbattiṭṭiyur Pattinikkuratti, her disciple Purva Nandi Kuratti etc. All these names and records belong to ninth-tenth century A.D., and are referred to elsewhere also in Tamilnadu as at Kalugumalai.

5.2.3.25 ANNAVASAL

Annavasal, a hamlet near Śittannavāsal, was also a Jaina Centre in ancient time. Though the Jaina temple of the village has disappeared in course of time, two images representing a Tīrthaṅkara are found on the western side of the local tank (Palli-urani channel in the village).

The first is a headless one, shown seated on a pedestal in dhyana posture, flanked on either side by fly-whisk bearers and surmounted by scroll design. The other image which is supposed to be of Mahāvīra, possesses almost identical features of the former icon, but smaller in size.⁷⁸ Mahāvīra is seated on a pedestal with attendants, Matāṅga and Siddhāyikā, with scroll work decoration over the head and flying divinities on the sides and with rampant lion motif for the architrave beam of the seat-back.

⁷⁸ Manual of Pudukkottai State, P.1018.

5.2.3.26 BOMMAIMALAI

Not far away from Aluruttimalai is a small hillock locally known as Bommaimalai⁷⁹ on the southern side of the village road branching off from the Pudukkottai - Trichy main road.

Its original name was Thentiruppallimalai.

On account of the rock-cut sculpture of a Tīrthāṅkara carved on the vertical surface of a boulder near a rock-shelter, it came to be called Bommaimalai.

5.2.3.27 TIRUKOGARNAM

In Tirukogarnam, in Pudukkottai, there is a Jain idol with triple umbrellas on the top of the hill called Sadaiyāpārai⁸⁰ and it is even now worshipped by the people in the neighbourhood as Sadaiyāpāraimuni.

It is a medium sized bas relief, said to be of Mahāvīra, exhibiting stylistic features of the 9th century A.D. The image together with the nearby rock shelter, serving as the abode of monks, was once known as perunarkilichcholaperumpalli.

⁷⁹ Desai, Op.Cit., Pp.53f.

⁸⁰ Sadaiyaparai is a small hillock in Tirukogaranam within the town limits of Pudukkottai. About half a Kilometre from the Tirukogarnesvara Śiva temple, is a boulder containing an image of a Tīrthāṅkara shown seated in a dhyana posture.

5.2.3.28 NĀRTTĀMALAI

Nārttāmalai⁸¹ is situated about 18 kilometres from Pudukkottai on the way to Kiranur and it is one of the important Jaina centres in early medieval times. It is famous even to this day for its Jain remains and attracts quite a large number of visitors.

There are eight hills in Nārttāmalai⁸² which are now known by the following names:

- a. Mēl - malai
- b. Kōṭṭaimalai
- c. Kaḍambar - malai
- d. Paraiyan - malai
- e. Ūvacca - malai
- f. Ālurutti - malai
- g. Maṇ - malai and
- h. Poṇ - malai

Of these Mēl-malai and Āluruttimalai were occupied by Jains. The Mēl-malai (Western hill) is popularly known as Śamaṇa-malai (Jain hill). It seems to have been a fortified hill showing traces of a fort.

⁸¹ Desai, Op.Cit., P.53;

Also Manual of Pudukkottai State, 1944, Vol.II, P.1092.

⁸² S.R.Balasubramanyan and K.Venkatarangam Raju, "Narttamalai and its temples", Journal of Oriental Research, October-December 1933, P.24.

The hills in the Narttamalai, commonly known as Samanarkudagu or the hill of the Jains, contains two rock-cut temples, one dedicated to Śiva and the other to Arhadeva.

5.2.3.29 ĀLURUṬṬIMALAI

Āluruṭṭimalai⁸³ also known as Ammachatram hill near Nārttāmalai, is an elongated rock with a continuous steep inclination on one side and a steep drop over a hundred feet on the other. It was anciently called Vedatiruppalli-malai.

It has a natural cave on its northern slope, containing four polished stone beds cut on the floor. Two of them are hewn together as to form a double bed, while the others are single beds carved separately.

The over-hanging rock of the cave was carved with two bas-reliefs of Tīrthaṅkaras seated in dhyana posture and surmounted by triple umbrellas above the head. These images, probably representing the first and the last Tīrthaṅkaras, bears stylistic features of the 10th Century A.D.

⁸³ The Āluruṭṭimalai or 'Man-rolling hill' obtained its name from the practice adopted in former times of executing criminals by rolling them over the great precipice on the South side of the hill. The hill is about 400 feet in height and the upper part of the great south scarp overhangs slightly - 'Pudukkottah History', P.8.

Also P.B. Desai, Op.Cit., P.53.

5.2.3.30 MALAYAKKOIL

Malayakkoil is a village 18 kms away from Pudukkottai town in the Tirumayyam tāluk. The small hillock in the village contains two rock-cut temples dedicated to the Saiva faith. However the place seems to have had some connection with Jainism. An inscription, fragmentary in nature, engraved on a boulder to the left of the entrance into the rock-cut temple mentions the name Gunasena who enunciated the art of learning Parivadini, the seven stringed instrument (lute)⁸⁴. It is held that Gunasena was a Jaina monk who resorted to a life in isolation at Malayakkoil⁸⁵. This would show, among other things, the keen interest evinced by the Jaina friars in the sacred art of music.

5.2.3.31 PUTTAMBUR

Puttambur, situated 12 kms from Pudukkottai, lies on the north-eastern side of the road leading to Bhutalur. It had been a centre of various religious sects like Jainism, Saivism and Islam. At the outskirts of the village, a dilapidated brick structure was noticed. On clearing the rubbles, the foundation of a temple and an image of a Tīrthaṅkara were brought to light. The Tīrthaṅkara sculpture is shown seated in dhyana posture, measuring 4' in height.⁸⁶ It exhibits stylistic features of the 12th Century A.D. It is said that this image had been worshipped by the Hindus mistaking it for Lord Ganesa. Locally, it was called by them as 'Mottai Pillaiyar' which means Ganesa with a tonsured head.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Pudukkottai State Inscription (P.S.I). No.4.

⁸⁵ M.S. Venkatasamy, *Samanamum Tamilum* (Tamil), 1959, P.134.

⁸⁶ A Manual of Pudukkottai State, Vol.II, Pt.2, P.993.

⁸⁷ M.S.Venkatasamy, *Op.Cit.*, P.136.

Though the ruined Jaina temple and the Tīrthaṅkara image at Puttambur are datable to the 12th Century A.D. the village had Jaina affiliation as early as the 9th Century A.D.

Puttambur and Kulamangalam retain their old names even to the present day and are found in the Arantangi taluk of Pudukkottai district.

5.2.3.32 CHETTIPATTI

Chettipatti, otherwise known as 'Samanar Kundu' in Kulattur taluk, is yet another prolific medieval Jaina centre with a dilapidated structural temple, locally called 'Vattikoil' dedicated to one of the Tīrthaṅkaras. The edifice had a shrine and a front maṇḍapa, both enclosed by a prākāra wall. Except the basement, the other components of the temple have disappeared due to the ravages of time. The sculptures of Mahāvīra, Pārśvanātha and Cauri-bearers which once adorned the niches of the structure are kept on, the site itself. Besides, two pillars with lion base, originally supporting the roof of the maṇḍapa are also placed by the side of the loose sculptures.⁸⁸

Among the sculptural vestiges, the figure of Mahāvīra and the head of a Pārśvanātha image are worthy of note. Mahāvīra is shown seated on a pedestal without the Simhāsana, Cauri-bearers, creeper design, Prabhāvalī, triple umbrella etc., Simplicity and grandeur are fully manifest in this icon of Mahāvīra. The head of Pārśvadeva is an exquisite specimen of plastic art illustrating the best tradition. The five-hooded serpent canopy, smiling

⁸⁸ Manual of Pudukkottai State, Vol.II, Part-II, Pp.1022-1023.

countenance of the Tīrthaṅkara, his curly hair arranged in small circles, half-closed elongated eyes, prominent nose etc., portray stylistic features of the 10th Century A.D.

There are three individual sculptures of cauri-bearers, carved upto the middle part, which formed part of the decoration of the temple wall. The sculptor's mastery in carving is easily judged from a separate sculpture of a lion, the mount of Ambikā Yakshi, a simple theme so beautifully executed. The history of the temple after the 10th Century A.D., remains in oblivion as there is no evidence of the later period.

5.2.3.33 TENIMALAI

Tenimalai, also known as Tenurmalai in the Tirumayyam taluk, was one of the early Jaina centres of the Pudukkottai region. The hill on the eastern side has a natural cavern locally known as Andarmadam (monastery of mendicants), which once served as the abode of Jaina ascetics. The overhanging rock is roughly cut in the form of a drip-ledge in order to carry rain water away from the cavern. Accumulation of thick sandy deposit on the floor of the cavern over centuries forbids our knowledge about the existence of stone beds. The simplicity of the shelter with the crudely cut drip-ledge lends it an early age C.200 B.C. - 300 A.D.⁸⁹ Inscriptions in Brāhmī characters, generally met with in early Jaina resorts, are however, conspicuous by their absence here.

⁸⁹ A.Ghosh (ed.), *Jaina Art and Architecture*, Vol.I, P.101.

The Tenimalai ascetic abode was in continuous occupations by Śramanas till about the 9th Century A.D. as is evidenced by epigraphs and sculptural representations of Tīrthaṅkaras. The adjacent boulder has bas-reliefs of three Tīrthaṅkaras each canopied by triple umbrellas and flanked on either side by cauri-bearers. They are shown seated in yogāsana and, bear stylistic features of the 9th century A.D.

5.2.3.34 ŚITTANNAVĀSAL

The Jaina vestiges at Śittannavāsal near Pudukkottai have remarkably survived various vicissitudes. This is a notable Jaina centre which was in continuous occupation of the Jains from the second Century B.C to the ninth Century A.D.

At an almost inaccessible height in another part of the hill away from the rock cut temple there is a natural cavern formed of a cleft which divides the overhanging top portion from the rocky floor below⁹⁰.

The spot where the cavern lies is generally known as eladipattam on account of the seven (ēḷu) square holes which are used as steps for reaching the cavern. Seventeen beds are chiselled in the cavern (Refer Plates). Some of the stone beds are damaged, but all of them are provided with a raised portion at one end, which was obviously meant to serve as a pillow. These are evidently beds where the Jain ascetics performed the severest form of

⁹⁰ P.B.Desai, Jainism in South India, 1957, Pp.51 ff;
Also Manual of Pudukottai State, 1944, Vol.II, P.1092.

austerities known as Sallēkhana⁹¹. The great antiquity of the cave is proved conclusively by an inscription⁹² in the Brāhmī Script and Tamil language which palaeographically can be assigned to the 3rd or 2nd Century B.C.

Śittannavāsal⁹³ possesses a natural cavern which contains seventeen beds with pillows cut into the rock. Śittannavāsal is the name given to a long range of hills, which literally connotes the abode of the revered siddhas or Jaina monks. The word siddha is pronounced as sitta in Tamil and Vasal means 'the dwelling place'.

The stone beds at Śittannavāsal are damaged (Refer plates) but all are provided with a raised portion at one end which is evidently meant to serve as a pillow. Like the beds discovered in other parts of the Southern districts, these allow sufficient space for a man to lie down comfortably on them.

⁹¹ Sallēkhana : The practice of ending one's life through self-imposed starvation.

The early caves with Brāhmī inscriptions found in and around Madurai and other parts of Tirunelveli and Ramanathapuram districts were probably the pālis of the Jain ascetics, who performed the Sallēkhana fasting for 56 days and finally gave up life.

For a detailed examination of the term 'Sallēkhana' refer Appendix 26.

⁹² Pudukkottai State Inscriptions (P.S.I), No.1

⁹³ The name Śittannavāsal is so un-Tamilian that to explain its derivation one has to look to its Sanskrit or Prākṛit form. In Sanskrit it will be "Siddhānam Vasah" ie., the abode of the Siddhas or ascetics and in Prakrit "Siddhaṇṇa - Vāsa".

T.N.Ramachandran, Jaina Monuments and places of First class importance, (Calcutta, 1944), P.40.

An ancient record in Brāhmī characters runs round the top and the left side of one of the 17 beds in the cavern.

5.2.4. ROCK-CUT TEMPLES

Rock-cut Jaina cave temples in the Tamil country date from the seventh century. They are usually found in the hills which have been earlier occupied by the Jaina ascetics as early as the second century B.C. and some of which continued to be important Jaina centres till late medieval times.

With commodious caverns with shrine and cells built of brick and mortar, many of these hill-establishments formed important centres of monasteries and nunneries. It is in such places that the Pāṇḍyas excavated their numerous rock-cut temples.

Because of the lesser tractability of the stone available in these parts of Pāṇḍya kingdom and hence of the differences in the technique of cutting and the labour and time included, these layanas or cave-temples are of modest proportions and of the simple maṇḍapa type. They consist essentially of a rectangular maṇḍapa with a facade of pillars and pilasters, short, massive and plain, except for carving and decoration in low bas-relief, and with a shrine cut into the rear wall behind or into the lateral walls. The maṇḍapa is often differentiated into front and rear portions by an inner row of pillars or, in their absence, by a difference in the floor and ceiling levels. The shrine front is often projected into the maṇḍapa and has usually all the features of a Southern vimāna.

The rock-cut Jaina Cave temple at Sittannavasal, called in its inscription, Arivar-Kovil of Annalvāyil (temple of the Arhat at Annvaśal), (Refer Plates) must have come into existence in the late seventh or early eighth century as can be deduced from the palaeography of a short label inscription on the northern side of the base of the rock-cut maṇḍapa⁹⁴.

ARCHITECTURE OF SITTANNAVASAL ROCK-CUT CAVE TEMPLE

The architecture is simple and elegant. There are the usual four pillars supporting the roof of the cave, two standing in the middle and the other two, those at the ends, being embedded on the side of the cave, so that a portion of each alone projects.

The central pillars are square in section with the usual octagonal belt in the centre and support capitals which present horizontal flutings. The capitals support the architrave, a long flat beam, which in turn supports a projecting cornice.

The oblong rock-cut maṇḍapa with a facade of two pillars and two pilasters and a square shrine cell behind, with a higher floor level reached by a short flight of two or three steps with *sūrul-yāli* (gargoyle) and with a simple door opening leading to the sanctum sanctorum. Shrine-front is, as usual, projected a little into the maṇḍapa. The two end walls of the maṇḍapa have niches or *deva-koṣṭhas* sunk into them. (Refer Plates) The Southern niche

⁹⁴ Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy, 1960-61, No.324.

contains a bas-relief of seated Pārśvanātha with a serpent - hood and triple umbrella (Refer Plates). A Tamil label - inscription on a pillar near it reads ulokādittan (Lokāditya) referring to this Pārśvanātha.

The northern niche contains a seated relief in dhyāna - pose with single umbrella (Refer plates) and from the Tamil label - inscription on a pillar near it, reading Tiruvāśirīyan (Śrī-Ācārya), it is to be taken as a representation of an Ācārya.

The walls and ceilings of both the maṇḍapa and cella are finished smooth and the ceiling of the cella has the brim of a large circular umbrella with the central hub of the ribs cut in relief. On the hind wall is a row of three bas-reliefs all seated in the "Samparyāṅka" pose with the legs crossed and palms placed on lap one over the other alike in dhyana. Two of them have triple umbrellas over their heads (Refer plates) indicating them to be Tīrthaṅkaras, while the third at one end has only one umbrella, denoting it to be that of an Ācārya or Cakravartin.

According to an inscription in Tamil verse on the rock-face immediately to the south of the maṇḍap-facade⁹⁵ belonging to the time of the Pandya king Avanipaśekhara Śrī vallabha (Śrī Mara Śrī Vallabha, A.D. 815-62), a Jain teacher Ilaṅ-gautamaṇ, also called Madurai Āsirīyaṇ, arranged for the repair and renovation of the ardhamāṇḍapa by having removed all defects therein and having re-embellished it with paintings and sculpture, had a structural

⁹⁵ Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy, 1904, No.368.

mukha-maṇḍapa built in front, of which the original base of moulded adhiṣṭhāna is still extant⁹⁶. It also refers to the erection of a tall pillar, manastamba, the square abacus of which, with a lotus underside, was recovered during clearance-work in front of the temple. Thus, this cave-temple, located in the northern part of the Pāṇḍya empire to which Pallava power did not penetrate before A.D. 862, was never a Pallava Cave-temple as some authors have made out. It appears to have been originally excavated at the close of seventh or the beginning of the eighth century in the propitious times of the Pandya Maran Sendan (A.D.654-670) and Arikesari Maravarman (A.D.670-700) and before the latters' conversion of the Malaiyadikkurichi and Pechchipparai cave temples.

⁹⁶ The present construction of the stone maṇḍapa with four stone pillars and slab-roof was erected as a preservative measure by K.R.Srinivasan while he was the State Archaeologist in Pudukkottai before 1946 on the clues of the original mandapa. The pillars used are from the ruined hundred-pillared mandapa of the Kudumiya malai Śiva (Sikhānāthasvāmi) temple. The adhiṣṭhāna below is original.